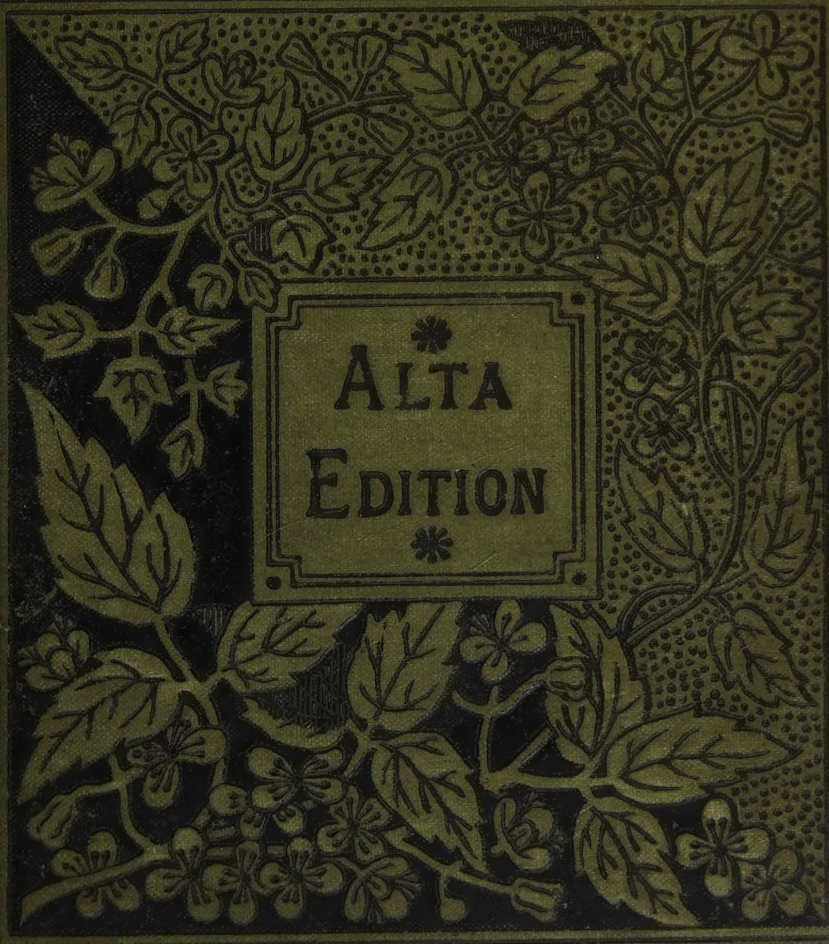
LIFE OF CROMWELL



Mary Shepard
Dayton, O.
Apr. 13th 1891.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

OLIVER CROMWELL;

OR,

ENGLAND'S GREAT PROTECTOR.

BY

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

Author of "Henry VIII and his Six Wives," "The Captains of the Greek and Roman Republics," "The Roman Traitor," etc., etc.

"It is his glory, that he made the name of Englishman as much a passport and a safeguard to its bearer, the world over, as ever had been the style of Roman citizen."

UNPUBLISHED HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

PHILADELPHIA:

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TO

THE PUBLIC OF AMERICA,

TO WHOM,

WHEN THIS WORK WAS FIRST CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED,

HE WAS, HIMSELF, BUT AN

UNKNOWN AND NAMELESS STRANGER,

BUT WITH WHOM TIME AND

THE OFTEN EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES AND KINDNESS

HAVE LED HIM, NOW, TO HOPE HIMSELF

A FRIEND,

This Volume is Respectfully Dedicated,

BY THE AUTHOR,

HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT

The Cedars, *June*, 1856.

PREFACE.

MANY years having elapsed, since this, my second, attempt at historical romance made its appearance, in a period of civil and commercial darkness and depression, and the work itself having been long out of print and withheld from the book market, I have determined to reproduce it, thoroughly revised and corrected, and in some passages re-written, in the hope that it will not be unacceptable to those of my readers, who, familiar with my later works, have not chanced to fall upon this, which was, perhaps, the first to procure for me, however small, a share of popular favor.

The faults, to which a fair and generally favorable criticism chiefly objected in it, not, I now think, without cause, a certain turgidity of style, and the length and involution of the sentences, have been repaired, as far as possible; and, while the plot and incidents of the narrative, and more particularly the scheme and sentiment of the work, have been unchanged, much of the language and not a few of the thoughts have been altered, I trust, for the better.

So that I hope, with some confidence, the picture of England's Great Protector—in whom, considering the time at which I wrote, I was, I believe, one of the first to discern and to describe, a man misguided by his own overboiling zeal, rather than a misleader of other men; a chief,

driven onward as the instrument of a paramount necessity forcing him to climb the bloody ladder of ambition, rather than a demagogue, a hypocrite and an usurper; a sovereign, patriotic, able, energetic, moderate, and just, as any who has sat on England's throne; and less bloody than any, who has won it by his unassisted will and greatness—will be found, in the main, unflattered as undistorted, true, and life-like.

The features of the portrait are unaltered; the atmosphere, through which, some twenty years ago, I discerned what, it seemed to me, was the true aspect of this great and wondrous man, is the same now, to my perceptions, as it was then. I have no page to tear, no sentence to erase. It is the tints and tones of the coloring, which will be found changed, I hope improved, by the retouchings, which the experience of years and the use of letters —in which, when this volume was produced, I was but a novice—have since shown me to be more than desirable.

With some confidence and much gratitude, for the patient and continued indulgence which my labors have constantly experienced at the hands of the public, I commit this work to their gentle censure, and subscribe myself their servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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OLIVER CROMWELL.

BOOK I.

This is true liberty, when freeborn men,
Having to advise the public, may speak free;
Which he, who can and will, deserves high praise:
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a state, than this?

MILTON—*From Euripides*

OLIVER CROMWELL.

CHAPTER I.

A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

"Can this be me—
Who hath no privilege of gentle birth,
Beauty, nor grace, nor utterance sublime
Of words persuasive, nor the blood-bought skill
That wins i' the forgotten field!"

ANON.

"EVEN as you will, fair sir—even as you will! Though an' you ride for Huntingdon this night, and wish not, ere it be two hours the later, that you had tarried here at the White Dragon, then am I not called Walter Danforth, nor have I drawn good ale in Royston these forty years and better."

With this ill-omened speech did mine host of the solitary inn, in the pretty village he had named, wind up the long catalogue of bad roads, broken bridges, and miry fords, with which, according to time-honored usage among the lords of the spigot, he had been endeavoring to beguile a late traveller who had paused at his door, in the gathering gloom of a September evening, to inquire his onward route, as much as to water the good beast he rode, or to refresh himself, after a long day's journey.

In the present instance, however, it would seem that the ominous warnings of the worthy Boniface were destined to be of none effect, for with a cheerful smile the traveller answered—

"'Tis like enough, good host of mine—'tis like enough—so all the cates of the White Dragon vie with this puissant Bourdeaux;" and, as he spoke, he proffered to the landlord's grasp the mighty flagon of bright pewter,

which, despite his eulogy, he had left still mantling with its generous liquor,—"but, were the venture deeper, I must on to-night; and, in good sooth, I have journeyed too often through the midnight passes of the wild Abruzzi, and the yet wilder Pyrenean hills of Spain, to ponder gravely on a late ride or a sprinkled doublet among these chalky wolds of Hertfordshire."

"Aye! were that all—" returned the other, heaving a long breath after the potent draught with which he had exhausted the flagon, and eyeing wistfully the coins which had dropped with so sweet a jingle into his greasy palm, —"Ay, were that all—but there are worse customers on Ermine-street than darkness, or storm either, though the clouds be mustering so black in the west yonder, over the woods of Potton. Wise men ride not forth now-a-days an hour after sundown, nor earlier, save in company."

"Then must Old England be sore changed since last I left her," replied the traveller, a shade of thought or sorrow, for it might be either, crossing his features, and not entirely effaced by the frank smile which followed it. "And if she be—" he paused, unwilling, as brave men ever are, to utter sentiments which might, however justified by the occasion, sound boastfully.

"And if she be?" inquired the interested landlord, seeing that his guest hesitated to complete his sentence, "and if she be sore changed?"

"Why, then hath brown Bess borne me through worse frays than I am like to meet, I trow, on this side Huntingdon; nor will it be small peril that shall arrest her now; and so good e'en, fair landlord."

"A bold bird and a braggart!" muttered the disconcerted publican, as the horseman, giving the spur to the high-bred mare of which he had just spoken, rode briskly off. "But if he meet with those I wot of, he may yet crow craven."

Who those were to whom his words so pointedly alluded, is not perhaps a question of any moment, unless it be from the vast conception of their prowess which appears to have been entertained by the landlord of the White Dragon; for, in truth, the gentleman who had earned his ill-will merely by a natural reluctance to tarry

ir. Royston when his occasions called him elsewhere, was of very different mould from one of whom it would be said that he was like to fall an easy or unresisting prey to any who should dare dispute his progress.

Removed alike from the greenness of inconsiderate youth and from the inactivity of an advanced age, the rider might be looked upon as exhibiting a specimen of manhood in the full vigor of its endowments, both mental and corporeal, as fair as is permitted by the imperfections of humanity. Considerably above the ordinary height of men, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and thin-flanked, he sat his charger with an ease and firmness resulting more from natural grace and flexibility of limb than from the practiced art of the manége. His eye was clear and even quick, though thought and calmness seemed to belong, rather than energy or fire, to its general expression,—qualities belied neither by the broad imaginative forehead, nor by the firm and slightly compressed outline of his chiselled lips. He wore a small moustache, but neither beard nor whiskers, although both these were common in the last years of the unhappy monarch who at that time swayed the destinies of England. His hair, as was the wont among the higher classes of society, flowed in loose curls, trained with peculiar care, far down the neck and over the collar of the doublet, while a single ringlet, longer and more assiduously cherished than the rest, seemed to indicate that the wearer was not of one mind with the pamphlet lately published by the notorious Master Prynne on the "unloveliness of love-locks."

The dress of this cavalier, a loose velvet jerkin of that peculiar shade which, from being the favorite color of the greatest painter of his day, has been dignified with the immortal title of Vandyke, was slashed and broidered with black lace and satin; tight breeches of buff leather, guarded with tawny silk, high boots, and massive spurs, completed his attire. He wore a broad-leafed hat of dark gray beaver, with one black ostrich feather drooping from the clasp which held it over the left eyebrow. His military cloak of sable cloth and velvet was buckled to the croup of his war-saddle, while from beneath the housings of the bow peered out the heavy pistols, which had not

long before supplanted the lance as the peculiar weapon of the horseman. A long rapier, with its steel scabbard and basket-hilt of silver delicately carved, hung from a shoulder-scarf of the same color with his doublet, matched by a poinard of yet more costly fabric in his Cordovan leather girdle.

When it is added that the mare which he had styled "brown Bess" was an animal that might be pronounced unrivalled for the rare union she displayed of strength and beauty, of English bone and the best blood of Barbary—the latter manifested in the clean limb, full eye, and coat glancing like polished copper to the sunlight—naught will be wanting to the picture of the traveller who was now journeying right onward, undismayed, if not incredulous, by all that he had heard, across the bleak and barren hills which skirt the southern verge of Cambridgeshire.

The season was that usually the most delicious of the English year—the bright and golden days of early autumn —when the promises of spring and summer are fulfilled in the rustling harvest-field and the rich orchard, and before the thoughts of change, decay, and death are forced upon the mind by the sere leaf and withered herbage. The day had been mild and calm, and, though evening was far advanced, the sun was still shooting his slant rays over the rounded summits and grassy slopes of the low hills through which the ancient Roman way holds its undeviating course. Ere long, however, the clouds of which the landlord had spoken as gathering so darkly to the westward, though at that time visible only in a narrow streak along the edge of the horizon, began to rise in towering masses, until the light of the declining day was first changed to a dark and lurid crimson, and then wholly intercepted.

After a while the wind, which had been slight and southerly, veered round and blew in fitful squalls, now whirling the dust and stubble high into the air, and then subsiding into a stillness that, from the contrast, seemed unnatural. Such was the aspect of the night when the sun set; and the little light which had hitherto struggled through intervals of the increasing storm-cloud, waned rapidly to al-

most utter darkness. To render the traveller's position yet less enviable, he had already passed the open country, and was now involved in the mazes of scattered woodland, which in the seventeenth century overspread a large portion of that country. The way, too, which had thus far been firm and in good order, now running between deep, hollow banks, resembled rather a water-course deserted by its torrent, than a public thoroughfare; so that his progress was both slow and painful until he reached the banks of the Cam—at that place, as throughout much of its course, a strong and turbid stream, wheeling along in sullen eddies, between shores of soft black loam. Here daylight utterly deserted him, its last glimpse barely sufficing to show that the bridge had been carried away, and that the river was apparently unfordable; since a miry track wandered away from the brink to the right hand, as though in search of a place where it might pass the current, and resume its natural direction to the northward.

While he was considering what course it would be most advisable that he should pursue, a few large heavy drops of rain plashed on the surface of the gloomy stream, warning the stranger to hasten his decision. Then, as he turned to follow, as best he might, the devious and uncertain path before him, the windows of the heavens were opened, and down came the thick shower, pattering on the thirsty earth, and lashing the river's bosom into a sheet of whitened spray. Thoroughly drenched, and almost hopeless of recovering the true direction of his journey until the return of daylight, it was yet not a part of that man's character to hesitate, much less to falter or despair. Having once determined what it would be for the best to do, he turned to his right down the cart-way, and resolutely persevered in spite of wind, rain, and darkness, though it oftentimes required the full exercise of spur and rein to force the gallant animal which he bestrode against the furious gusts and pelting storm. For a weary hour or more he plodded onward, feeling his way, as it were, step by step, and guided only by the flashes of broad lightning which from time to time glared over the desolate scene, with an intensity that merely served to render the succeeding gloom more dreary. At

length, by the same wild illumination, he discovered that his path once more turned northward, sinking abruptly to the verge of that black river. Of the farther bank he could distinguish nothing; and though for many minutes he awaited the return of the electric flash before attempting to stem the unknown ford, with that singular perversity which even things inanimate and senseless at times seem to exhibit, the flashes returned no more. Still no word of impatience or profanity rose to his lip, as he spurred the reluctant mare resolutely down the steep descent, holding his pistols, which he had drawn from their holsters, high above his head.

At the first plunge, as he had well expected, all foothold was lost, and nothing remained but a perilous swim, not without considerable risk of finding an impracticable bank at the farther side; but whether it was the result of skill or of fortune, or, more probably than either, a combination of the two, after a few rough struggles and a scramble through the tenacious mire, horse and man stood in safety on the northern verge. Not yet, however, could the adventures of that night be deemed at an end; for, having once deviated from it during the hours of darkness, it was no easy matter to recover the line of the high road. The storm, it is true, after a while abated; and the by-path into which he struck was sufficiently hard to enable the cavalier to travel at a pace more rapid than he had tried since quitting Royston; but, notwithstanding this, so much time had been lost, and so small did the prospect seem of reaching his destination, or indeed any other village at which to pass the night, that the merciful rider was beginning to occupy himself in searching for such temporary shelter as a cattle-shed, or the lee-side of some lonely haystack might afford, when his eye was attracted by a distant light—now seen, now lost among the young plantations, or scattered belts of forest which checkered everywhere the scenery.

It required but a moment's pause to discover that the light was in a motion, and at a smaller distance than he had at first conjectured; and though there might have been grounds for suspicion and distrust to the weak or timid, in the place and manner of its appearance, quick

ening his pace to a gallop, and somewhat altering his course, he rode straight for the object. Five minutes brought him to a bank and ditch, evidently skirting the road of which he was in quest. The clatter of the horse's hoofs as he leaped the trifling obstacle, and landed safely on the rough pavement of the Roman way, was, it would seem, the first intimation of his approach that reached the bearers of the light; for ere he could distinguish more than the figures of two or three rude-looking countrymen, one of them bearing on his shoulders what resembled the carcass of a deer, it was either extinguished altogether or suddenly veiled from sight.

"They are upon us," cried a hoarse voice, "shoot, Wilkin!" and instantly the clang of a steel crossbow, and the whistle of the heavy bolt, as it narrowly missed the rider's ear, showed that the mandate was complied with as promptly as delivered.

"Hold! hold your hands!" he shouted, "or ye will fare the worse. Ye know me not, nor care I aught for ye."

"Fare the worse, shall we?" interrupted the other,—"that shall we see anon. Come on, brave boys, and down with this proud meddler!" and with a loud fierce cry, some six or seven men, as he judged from the sound of their footsteps, rushed against him. In the moment which had elapsed since the first outrage, he had drawn his sword, and was already on his guard; but it was not destined that he should this time need its service; for just as he reined up his steed, and parried the first blow aimed at him with a bludgeon or quarter-staff, the quick tramp of coming horsemen was heard upon the road behind him; and with their swords drawn, as if alarmed by the shout of his assailants, two or three persons galloped rapidly to his assistance.

"What knaves be these?" inquired a loud and dissonant voice from the foremost of the new-comers, as the cavalier fell back toward his welcome rescuers. "What knaves be these that raise this coil on the highway?"

"Down with the thieving Girgashites!" shouted another of the riders, ere an answer could be rendered to the querist; and, at the word, he fired a petronel at random,

its momentary flash displaying the marauders struggling, as best they might, through a strong blackthorn fence, which parted the road from a wild tract of coppice, glade, and woodland. "Deer-stealers, Master Oliver," he continued, reslinging his now useless weapon, "after the herds of my Lord De la Warr. But I have scared them for the nonce!"

"More shame to thee, Giles Overton," cried the same voice which had first spoken, "and more sin likewise, to use the carnal weapon thus in causeless strife; setting the precious spirit of a being like to thyself, or, it may well be, thy better, upon the darkling venture of chance-medley, and bartering a human life against the slaughter of a valueless and soulless beast. Go to, Giles Overton, see that thou err not in the like sort again! But art thou hurt, good sir?" proceeded the speaker, turning in his saddle toward the traveller, for whose safety he had come up so opportunely,—"or have we, by the mercy of the Lord, who may in this — if it be not presumptuous in me, considering how unprofitable I am, and the mean improvement of my talent, so to judge of his workings — vouchsafe to preserve thee for a chosen vessel — have we, I would say, come in season to protect thee from these sons of Ammon?"

"Thanks to your timely aid, fair sir," replied the cavalier, not a little astonished at the strange address of his preserver; for he had but recently returned to his native land after protracted absence, and, at the time of his departure, the reign of the saints had not yet commenced on earth —"I am uninjured; and now, I pray you to increase yet farther this your kindness, by informing me the straightest road for Huntingdon; it cannot be, I do suppose, far distant."

"Good lack — a stranger, by your questioning," answered he who had been called Oliver; "Huntingdon do I know right well — ay! even as one knoweth the tabernacle of his abode, and the burial-place of his fathers; but I profess to you that it is distant by full thirteen miles, and those of sorry road. But ride thou on with me to Bourn, some three miles farther, and I will bestow thee at a house where thou mayst tarry until morn—the Fox

Tavern, I would say — Phineas Goodenough, my glove hath fallen; I pray thee reach it to me — a clean house, truly, kept by a worthy man — yea, verily; a good man, one that dwelleth in the fear of the Lord alway."

"A stranger doubtless," returned the other, "else had I not inquired of you that which I then had known; and, of a truth, I know not now that I can do aught better than to accept your proffer frankly as it is made!"

"Be it so!" was the ready answer. "Will it please you to ride somewhat briskly? for myself, I am bound an hour's ride farther to worshipful Master Pym's, nigh Caldecote!"

"Ha! Pym, the friend of Hampden and John Milton— I knew not he lived hereabout," exclaimed the cavalier.

"And what knowest thou, so I may ask it," queried Oliver, "of Hampden or John Milton? Truly, I took thee for a carnal-minded person; but, of a surety, it is not for a man to judge!"

"For what it liked your wisdom to mistake me, I know not; nor, to speak frankly, do I care greatly," replied the other; "but, to satisfy your question, of Hampden I know nothing, save that the mode of his resistance to that illegal claim of ship-money hath reached my ears, even where the tongue of England would have sounded strangely. John Milton, if it concerns you anything to know it, was, and that too for many months, my chosen comrade of the road, and my most eloquent tutor in the classsic lore of Italy!"

"In Italy, saidst thou? In Italy, and with John Milton?" answered Oliver, after a long and meditative pause; and, as he continued, his own voice had lost much of its harshness, and his manner not a little of its offensive peculiarity. "A better comrade couldst thou not have chosen than that pure-minded christian, that most zealous patriot. Verily, I say to you, that, in consorting with that sanctified, elected vessel, you must needs have imbibed some draughts more worthy than the profane and carnal lore of those benighted heathens, whose bestial and idolatrous rites are even now to be found corrupting with their accursed stench the faith which claims to be of Jesus, even as the stinking fly poisoneth the salve of the mediciner.

Verily I will believe that he hath opened unto you the door of that wisdom which is alone all in all! Ay! and as I find you here returning hard upon his heels, even as he hath of late returned from the city of her that sitteth on the seven hills, clothed in the purple of the harlot, may I not humbly hope — I would say — confidently trust, that you will also draw the sword of truth to defend this sore-aggrieved and spirit-broken people from the tyrannous oppression of their rulers, and the self-seeking idolatries of those that sit in the high places of the land!"

"Fair sir," replied the cavalier, "you question somewhat too closely; and open yourself, methinks, too freely for a stranger. That I come, summoned homeward by the rumor of these unhappy broils between our sovereign and his parliament, is not less true than that I care not either to conceal or deny it! Beyond this — what part soever I may play in that which is to come — pardon my plainness, sir, I do not deem it wisdom to discourse with a chance customer. Nor have I yet indeed decided what that part shall be, until I search more narrowly the grounds, and so find out my way 'twixt over license on the one hand, and, as it seems to me, intemperance on the other, and too fiery zeal!"

"Edgar Arden," returned the puritan, his naturally harsh voice subsiding into a hollow croak, "Edgar Arden — for I do know you, though, as you have truly spoken me, a stranger — I tell you now, this nation totters on the brink of a most strange and perilous convulsion! We are the instruments — vile instruments, it is true, but still instruments — in the hands of Him who holds the end of all things. Watched have we, and prayed; yea, wrestled with him in the spirit for a sign, and lo! a sign was sent us. It may be we shall achieve deliverance for our country — freedom from corporeal chains and spiritual bondage! It may be we shall fail, and, failing, seek the shelter of that New Jerusalem beyond the Western Ocean, wherein there be no kings to lord it o'er men's consciences, and to compel them how to worship God! But fail we, or succeed, the sign hath been given to us from on high, and therefore shall we venture! and fail we, or succeed — mark my words, Edgar Arden, for thou shalt think

on them hereafter — thy lot is cast with ours! Thy spirit is of our order, thy heart *is* with us, and thy tongue *shall be*, yea, and thy sword, likewise!"

"How you have learned my name, I comprehend not," answered Arden, for so must he be styled henceforth, veiling whatever of suspicion or annoyance he might feel beneath the semblance of calm indifference; "but, were it worth the while, I could assure you that, in learning this, you have learned all! What part you play in this wild drama,—whether you be hypocrite or zealot, patriot or traitor, I care nothing; but, if we meet hereafter, you will find that neither sophistry nor canting can affect my head, nor the dark phrensy of fanaticism reach my heart!"

"We *shall* meet," answered the stranger; "we *shall* meet again, and shortly! and then shall you too find whether I be saint or hypocrite — whether I be patriot or traitor! — and, above all, then shall you learn if, in these things that I have spoken, I be a lying prophet or a true! But lo you now — this is the Fox at Bourn, and here comes honest Langton, to whose good offices I do commit you!"

As he spoke, they drew up their horses before the door of the little wayside hostelry, a low and whitewashed tenement, imbosomed in deep woodlands, and nestling, as it were, amid the verdant foliage of jessamine and woodbine; while, warned already of their coming by the clatter of hoofs and the sound of voices, the puritanic person of mine host, bearing on high a huge and smoky flambeau, which poured its red light far into the bosom of the darkness, stalked forth to meet them. On his lean and starveling form, however, Arden cast but a passing glance, being employed in scrutinizing, by the wild illumination which streamed full upon them, the features of his singular companion; who had paused for a moment to allow his horse to drink, and to hold a whispered conversation with the landlord.

There was, however, nothing familiar to him, though he probed his memory to its lowest depth of youthful recollections, in that manly yet ungraceful figure, or in those lineaments, harsh and ill-favored to the verge of downright ugliness. Ill-favored was that countenance indeed,

with its deeply-furrowed lines and its sanguineous coloring; its sunken eyes, twinkling below the penthouse of the heavy matted brows; and its nose, prominent, rubicund, and swollen. Yet was there a world of thought in the expansive temples and the massive forehead — an expression of firmness that might restrain an empire in the downward curve of the bold mouth — and a general air of high authority and indomitable resolution pervading the whole aspect of the man.

The head of this remarkable-looking individual, at a period when the greatest attention was lavished on the hair by all of gentle birth, was covered with coarse locks, already streaked with gray, falling in long disordered masses on either cheek, and down the muscular, short neck, from underneath a rusty beaver, steeple-crowned and unadorned by feather, loop, or tassel. Instead of the cravat of Flanders lace, he wore a narrow band of soiled and rumpled linen; and his sword, a heavy iron-hilted tuck, was not suspended from a scarf or shoulder-knot, but girt about his middle, over a doublet of black serge, by a belt of calf-skin leather, corresponding to the material of his riding-boots, which were pulled up above the knee to meet the loose trunk hose, fashioned, as it would be supposed, by some country tailor from the same unseemly stuff with his cloak and doublet.

The only part of his appointments which would not have disgraced the commonest gentleman, was his horse, a tall gray gelding of great power and not a little breeding; yet even he was badly accoutred with mean and sordid housings. Such was the appearance of the person whose conversation had not been listened to by Edgar Arden without interest; and now — even while he confessed to himself that the man's frame and features entitled him to no regard as a person of superior caste or bearing — there was still something in his air which produced an indescribable effect on the mind of the cavalier, forcing him, as it were, despite his senses, to admit that he was in somewise remarkable, above, and at the same time apart from, ordinary mortals, and not unlike to one who might be perchance the mover of great changes in the estate of nations.

While he was yet gazing on him with ill-dissembled curiosity, the stranger, in his loud hoarse notes, bade him adieu, and, striking at once into a rapid trot, was swallowed up with his companions in the surrounding gloom. Arden, after a fruitless effort at ascertaining from the saintly and abstracted publican the name and quality of his late companion, applied himself to creature comforts, as the landlord termed them, of a higher order, and to a bed more neatly garnished, than he could have augured from the lowly exterior of the village inn; and slept as wearied travellers are wont to do, whose minds are tranquil and serene, until the sun, high in the heavens, called him to resume his journey.

CHAPTER II.

THE LADY OF HIS LOVE.

"A gentle being, delicately fair,
Full of soft fancies, timorous, and shy;
Yet high of purpose, and of soul so firm,
That sooner shall you the round world unsphere,
Than warp her from the conscious path of right.
A bright domestic goddess, formed to bless,
And soothe, and succor—oh most meet to be
The shrined idol of a heart like his." ANON.

DURING the whole of the two following days, the cavalier journeyed slowly to the northward, meeting with no adventures worthy of remark, and through scenes which, though beautiful and varied, it needs not to describe; and now the third day was drawing to its close, since his encounter with his strange ally, who, it must be said, though he did not again cross his path, did unquestionably occupy his mind more constantly than he could explain, or than he altogether liked to confess even to himself.

The sun, scarce elevated thrice the breadth of his own disk above the horizon, was now almost perceptibly declining in the west, though he still darted long, pencilled

rays of light athwart the landscape from between the folds of gauze-like mist which veiled his splendors from the eye. One of these straggling beams — while others might be discerned shedding their bright influences upon some verdant slope or twinkling waterfall, thus rescued, although miles away, from the hazy indistinctness that steeped the distant hills, and rendered prominent, like epochs marked by fame amid the gloom of ages else forgotten — found its way into a nook as sweet as ever poet sung or fairy haunted. It was an angle in one of those broad green lanes which form so beautiful a feature in the rural scenery of England. Carpeted with deep unfaded verdure, through which meandered a faint wheel-track; bordered by hedges so thick and tangled as to resemble natural coppices rather than artificial fences; imbowered by the fragrant honeysuckle, and spangled with the dewy flowers of the eglantine; decked with the golden blossoms of the broom, the fringe-like brachens, and the flaunting bells of the white and crimson fox-gloves; canopied by the foliage of the broad-leaved sycamore, the gnarled and ivy-mantled oak, or the lighter and more graceful ash; and watered by a tiny brooklet, that stole along, now on one side, now on the other, of the rarely-trodden path — here trickling over its many-colored pebbles with a mirthful music, there silently reflecting the tufted rushes and the mossy log that spanned its surface with a sylvan bridge — that solitary nook might well have furnished forth a tiring-room for Shakspeare's wild Titania.

Nor, though the days of Puck and Oberon were already numbered with the things that had been, even in the fancy of the superstitious villagers, did that lone bower lack its presiding genius; for on a trunk, cushioned with hoary lichens, and overlooking a crystal basin formed by the rill which undermined its tortuous roots, and had, perchance, in bygone ages, caused its decay and ruin, there sat a female form, loveliest among the lovely, so deeply buried in her own imaginings that she was almost as unconscious of all she looked upon as the senseless stump, on which she leaned so gracefully. She was a girl perhaps of twenty summers; for, looking on

her, it had been impossible to reckon save by summers, so sunny was the style of her young beauty. On either side of her white and dazzling forehead, ringlets in rich exuberance of the deepest auburn—so deep that, saving where they glittered gold-like in the sunshine, they might have been deemed black — fell off behind her ears and wantoned down her swan-like neck; while, in the luxury of calm abandoment, her velvet hat, dropped by her side, lay on the grass, its choice plumes dipping in the pool. Her eyes were bent so steadfastly upon the waters at her feet, that it was by the long dark lashes only, pencilled in clear relief against the delicate complexion of her cheek, that they could be judged large, and suited to the character of her most eloquent features.

Of an almost marble paleness, with scarce a rosy trace to tell of the pure blood which coursed so warmly through those thousand azure channels that veined her neck and bosom, there was yet a transparency, a glowing hue in her fair skin that spoke of all the lively elasticity of health; while, to remove a doubt, if doubt could have existed, the sweet curve of that small mouth, wooingly prominent, was tinged with the rich hue of the dark red carnation. Though Grecian in their chiselled outlines, there yet was more of intellect and energy in the expression of her features than of that poetical repose which forms the general character of the classic model. Her shape, as she reclined along her rustic couch, though of symmetrical roundness, was rather slight than full; and the ankle, displayed somewhat too liberally by the disordered draperies of her satin riding-dress, was slender as a woodnymph's might be fancied by a poet, while her dimpled chin was propped, in attitude of busy thought, on so diminutive a hand as would alone have proved her pedigree from the unconquered race of Normandy. Nor was the attitude belied by aught of consciousness or coquetry, for all betokened the deep hush of natural and unstudied meditation.

A beautiful white palfrey, with decorated rein and velvet housings, which stood unfettered at her side, awaiting, docile and gentle creature, the pleasure of his mistress, would stamp and toss his head till the silver bits

rang audibly, and uttered once or twice a tremulous neigh, unheeded at the least, if not unheard. A vagrant spaniel of the Blenheim breed, with soft dark eyes, and ears that almost swept the ground — one from a number that had followed the fair girl, and now dozed listlessly upon the grass around her—had been for some time rustling among the dewy bushes, and now sent forth a shrill and clamorous yelping, as pheasant after pheasant whirred up on noisy wings to the higher branches, whence they crowed, with outstretched necks, defiance to their powerless assailant. Still there was no sign in the demeanor of the lady to indicate that she had marked the sounds, harmonizing as they did with the spirit of the place and hour, and blending naturally with the low of the distant cattle, the cawing of the homeward rooks, and the continuous hum of the myriad insect tribes which were still disporting themselves in the September sunset, not the less merrily that their little glass of life had already run even to its latest sands.

But a noise arose, which, in itself by no means inharmonious, was not so much attuned to the rural melodies around but that it jarred discordantly on the ear. It was the clear and powerful voice of a man, venting his feelings, as he rode along—for at times the tramp of a horse might be distinguished, when his hoof struck upon harder soil than common, mingling with the measured tones — suddenly in the recital of such passages from the high poets of the day as were suggested to his memory, as it seemed, by the scenery around him. At first the accents were indistinct from distance, and their import quite inaudible; then, as the speaker drew so nigh that his words might partially be understood, the voice ceased altogether; but after a brief pause it again broke forth in the pure poetry of Drummond.

"Thrice happy he, who by some shady grove,
Far from the clamorous world, doth live his own,
Though solitary, who is not alone,
But doth converse with that eternal love:
O how more sweet is bird's harmonious moan,
Or the hoarse sobbings of the widowed dove,
Than those smooth whispers near a prince's throne,
Which make good doubtful—"

As the words passed his lips the horseman turned the last angle of the winding lane; and for the first time discovering that the free outpourings of his spirit had found a listener, Edgar Arden—for the moralist was no other—paused in his sonnet and checked his steed by a common impulse, and, as it seemed, a single movement. His eyes flashed joyfully as they met the large and azure orbs which the fair girl had raised at first in simple wonderment, but which now lightened with a gleamy radiance that he was not slow to construe into delighted recognition.

"Sibyl—sweet Sibyl!—"

"Edgar, can it indeed be you? Welcome, oh welcome home!"

At once, without a moment's interval, the words burst forth from either as they hastened — he with impetuous hurry from his charger, she gathering her ruffled robes about her, and rising from her rustic throne with the unblushing ease of conscious modesty — to manifest their pleasure at this unexpected meeting. Were they friends, or kindred, or more dearly linked than either by the young ties of holy, unsuspicious, and unselfish love? They met; the formal fashions of the day would scarcely have allowed the gallant to fold even a sister to his bosom; Edgar clasped her not, therefore, in the arms that evidently yearned to do so; but with a polished ease, belied by the flushed brow and frame that quivered visibly with eagerness, himself ungloving, he raised her white hand to his lips, which dwelt upon it even too fervently for brotherly affection.

A deep blush, glowing the more remarkably from its contrast to her wonted paleness, played over brow and cheek, and was visible, though with a fainter hue, even upon her neck and such brief portion of the bosom as might be descried between the fringes of rich lace that edged her bodice, but she expressed neither wonder nor reluctance at his familiar greeting. Though the small hand trembled in his grasp with a perceptible and quick emotion, it was not withdrawn; nor, while he gazed upon those eloquent eyes as steadfastly as though through them he would have read the inmost feelings of the spirit that

informed them, did she shrink from his evident though chastened admiration. A moment or two passed before either again spoke; it might be that their passionate feelings were better to be interpreted from silence than expressed by words—it might be that their hearts were full to overflowing, and that they dared not unlock those secret channels lest they might be led — he into such betrayal of his feelings as is deemed weak and womanish by the great mass of men, themselves too calculating or too cold to feel at all — she into such disclosure of her soul's treasured secret as oftentimes is censured, and not perhaps unjustly, as at the least impolitic, if not immodest or unmaidenly. It was, however, Sibyl who, with the delicate and ready tact peculiar to her sex, first broke the silence, which had endured so long already as to become almost embarrassing; and as she spoke, her words explained their relative position, although it might even then be doubted whether the full extent of their connection was divulged.

"I can hardly," she said, in those low and musical notes which are indeed an excellent thing in woman—"I can hardly trust my eyes, dear cousin, when they tell me, truant as you are and traitor, that you stand bodily before me. So long have our hearts been rendered sick by hope deferred — so often have we gazed, from peep of morn till the sad close of evening, for your expected, for your promised coming, and gazed but to be disappointed — that now, when you have truly come, we had ceased, not to hope, indeed, and pray, but surely to expect."

"Oh, Sibyl, did you know how many an anxious thought, how many a bitter pang these wearisome delays have cost me, you would pity rather than upbraid."

"Fair words, good cousin Edgar," she replied, with an arch glance, and a light thrilling laugh; "fair words, and flowery all! and with such, you lords of the creation, as in your vanity you style yourselves, deem you can wipe away the heaviest score of broken vows and perjured promises from the frail memories of us poor, deluded damsels. But, in good sooth, I marvel not that you should slight poor me, when you have questioned nothing, and that, too, after a three years' absence, of your noble

father; and when you stand here dallying within a scant mile of his presence, rounding your false excuses into a credulous lady's ear. For shame, sir! for my part, if I felt it not, then would I feign at least some natural affection."

"Wild as thou ever wert, fair Sibyl," answered Edgar, a beautiful smile playing over his grave features, and revealing a set of teeth even and white as ivory; "I hoped, when I beheld you so pensive and so melancholy, musing beside yon lonely pool, that years growing toward maturity might have brought something of reflection to tame those girlish spirits — but, in good faith, I should have known you better. But am I not assured, were it but by your being here so blithe and beautiful, that all goes well at home?"

"Well parried, if not honestly," still laughing, she replied; "and for your taunts on my demeanor, I defy you! But help me to my horse, sir loiterer, and we will homeward; for I do believe, despite your manifold enormities, that you would fain see those who, to your shame be it spoken, will feel more joy to greet you, than you have shown alacrity to do so much as ask of their well being. I warrant me, if you had met Sir Henry first, you had not once inquired whether poor I were in existence."

In another moment the lady was mounted on her white palfrey, and, with the cavalier beside her bridle-rein, rode toward her home more joyously than she had done for many a month before. Not, however, in loud mirth, nor even in the sprightly raillery which she had adopted on their first meeting, was her happiness divulged to common ears; but her soft eyes, dwelling fondly on the features long unseen of her accepted and acknowledged lover, though they were lowered modestly so often as they caught his answering glances—with the subdued and quiet tones of her melodious voice as they conversed of old home scenes and sweet familiar recollections, more endeared to them, all trivial as they were, than loftier memories — were confirmations strong as an angel's voice of her unchanged affection.

It was but a short ride homeward, rendered shorter yet to them by the enjoyment for so long a time unused,

though not forgotten, of each other's converse, by the sweet consciousness of mutual love, and by the full expansion of their feelings, unrestrained by the cold formalities of that most heartless intercourse which men have styled society, and untrammelled by any chains save those instinctive bonds of pure and delicate propriety which noble natures ever wear about them in the guise of flowery garlands, gracing, while they dignify, the motions which they in no respect impede. Passing for a mile or so through the windings of that verdant lane, here rendered almost gloomy by the shadows of occasional woodlands which it traversed, here running past the door of some secluded cottage, its thatched porch overhung with bowering creepers, and its narrow garden gay with tall hollyhocks and ever blooming peas, and here looking forth from intervals in the tall hedges over some sunny stubble-field, on which the golden shocks stood fair and frequent, or some deep pasture, its green surface dotted with sleek and comely cattle, they reached a rustic gate of unbarked timber, woven into fantastic shapes, and through it gained admittance into a demesne, as rich as ever was transmitted by its first winner of the bloody hand to a long line of undegenerate posterity.

Even to the wandering and homeless stranger there is a calm and quiet joy in the stately solitude of an English park; in its broad, velvet lawns, sloping verdantly away, studded with noble clumps, or solitary trees more noble yet, down to the verge of some pellucid lake or brimful river; in its swelling uplands, waving with broom and brachens, sweet haunt for the progeny of the timid doe, whence glitter frequently the white stems of the birch or the red berries of the mountain ash; in the wild belling of the deer, heard from some rock-ribbed glen, where they have sheltered during the hot noontide; in the cooing of the pigeon, or the repeated tap of the green woodpecker; in the harsh cry of the startled heron, soaring on his broad vans from the sedgy pool before the intruder's footstep; in the lazy limp of the pastured hares, and in the whirr of the rising covey. What then must be the feeling summoned by the same picture to the heart of one who hears in every rural sound, and witnesses in every

sylvan scene, the melodies that soothed his earliest slumber, and the sights that nursed his youngest meditations? To him those stately solitudes are peopled with a thousand holy recollections; the step, perchance, of a departed mother still roams beneath those immemorial trees; her musical voice still speaks to his heart audibly, and in the very tones his childhood loved, when all its cares were hushed; to him each bosky bourn and twilight dingle has its memory of boyish exploit, each murmuring rill of boyish revery.

Home — home — hackneyed as is the thought and timeworn — what a world of treasured sweetness is there in that one word, Home! The humblest as the highest — in sorrow as in mirth — to the needy exile as to the successful adventurer—for ever dear, for ever holy. Crowded out perhaps from the selfish spirit by the bustle, the tumult, the conflict of the day — but still returning with undiminished force when the placid influence of night and slumber shall have stilled the fitful fever, and restored to the sullied heart, for one short hour, the purity it knew of yore. Oh! if there be on the broad face of earth the wretch that loves not, with an unquenchable and everliving love, the native home — curse him not when ye meet, he is accursed already. Vindictive men have warred against, ambitious men have sacrificed, and sordid men have sold, their countries; but these, ay, each and all of these, if we could read their souls, have had their moments of repentant thought, their moments of triumphant fondness.

What then must have been the feelings of a mind like that of Arden — a mind coupling the severe and disciplined philosophy of schools with the warm and wild romance of a poetic fancy — a mind which had learned wisdom without learning vice, amid the fierce pleasures and the fiercer strife of a licentious world — a mind no less unselfish than it was reasoning and regular — a mind, filled with the beautiful principles of that universal love, which is honor, and patriotism, and every shape of virtue — virtue, not cold in itself, as the wicked say, and chilling all things that it touches, but genial, and enlivening, and warm with every generous aspiration? What must have

been the feelings of the man, endowed with such a mind, returning to his unforgotten home from years of restless wandering, in pursuit, not of the idol mammon, not of the phantom fame, but of that high philosophy which is derived from the perusal of men, not books; which is learned, not in the solitary chamber nor by the midnight lamp, but on the tented field and in the dazzling court, at the banquet and the masque, amid the treacheries of men and the wilier fascinations of beauty; as he was riding once again, after years of absence, by the bridle of his own betrothed, through the very fields in which he had won, years before, her virgin heart, and hastening to the embrace of a father, whom, much as he revered and honored him, he loved yet more? Who may describe that wonderful and deep sensation, that tincture of joy and sorrow, of bitterness and pleasure, which must be mingled to make up the draught of human happiness, exhibited no less in the gushing tear than in the glittering smile — in the choked voice and suffocating spasm, than in the flashing eye and the exulting pulse?

Enough — he was for the moment happy, absolutely and — if aught mortal may be called perfect — perfectly happy. The antiquated hall broke on his sight as he passed a belt of sheltering evergreens, its tall Elizabethan chimneys sent their columns of vaporous smoke far up into the calm heaven; its diamond-paned oriels glowed like sheets of fire to the reflected sun; its hospitable porch yawned to admit stranger or guest alike with kindly welcome; its freestone terraces were peopled by a group of lazy grayhounds basking on the steps, and a score or two of peacocks perched upon the balustrades, like the ornaments of an eastern throne, or strutting to and fro on the broad flag-stones in all their pride of gorgeous plumage.

He saw — he had no words — but his gentle companion might perceive his nether lip to quiver with strong emotion, and a tear, unrestrained by selfish pride, to trickle down his manly cheek. A heavy bell rang out; there was a bustle, and a rush of many servitors, badged and blue-coated men, with hoary heads and tottering limbs, the heir-looms of the family, transmitted, with the ances-

tral armor and the ancient plate, from sire to son. With difficulty extricating himself from the familiar greeting of these domestic friends, he hurried up the steps; but, ere he crossed the threshold, a noble-looking man, far past the prime of life, as might be seen from his long locks already streaked with wintry hues of age, but vigorous still and active, fell upon his neck with a quick shrill cry, "My son! my son!" the hot tears gushing from his eyes — not that he mourned, but that he did rejoice — to borrow the magnificent words of the Greek lyrist—"as he beheld his chosen offspring, the stateliest of the sons of men."

CHAPTER III.

A POET AND A PATRIOT.

Great men have been among us: hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none;
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend;
These moralists could act and comprehend;
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendor; what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous weakness.

WORDSWORTH—*Sonnets to Liberty.*

IT was a beautiful and tranquil evening; the broad bright hunter's moon was riding through the cloudless firmament, bathing the whole expanse of heaven with a radiance so pervading, that the numberless stars were well-nigh quenched in her more lustrous glory. It was one of those evenings on which we cannot gaze without comparing the pure and passionless quiet of the world above with the fierce solicitudes, the selfish strife, the angry turmoil of the world around us — one of those evenings which at any time must infuse a sentiment of peaceful melancholy into every bosom, even of the wild and worldly; but which has at no time so deep an influence on the spirit as when contemplated from the near vicinity of some large city. The contrast between the chaste

paleness of those celestial lamps, and the ruddy glare of the comparatively lurid lights glancing from many a casement,— between the perfect calm aloft, unbroken save by the gentle murmur of the wind, and the confused uproar below, rife with the din of commerce, the dissonance of mingled tongues, and now a distant scream, and now a burst of unmelodious laughter, must needs impress more strongly on the mind than aught of homily or lecture, that dissatisfaction with the mortal world, and the wretched things its tenants,— that ardent and inexplicable yearning after something of truer and more substantial happiness than we can here conceive,— that wish for "wings like a dove, that we might flee away and be at rest,"— which constitutes perhaps the most essential difference, as exhibited on earth, between ourselves and the yet lower animals, content to fatten and to perish.

Such was not improbably the strain of thought into which the aspect of the night had led one — a man, not yet advanced beyond the prime of life, of elegant though low proportions — who stood gazing heavenward as he leaned against the low wall of a pleasant garden, which, surrounded with its tall hedges of clipped yew and hornbeam, its gay parterres, and its pleached bowery walks, a fair suburban villa, situate in what was then, as now, termed Aldersgate, though at that period not a densely peopled thoroughfare, but a long straggling street, half town half country, with leafy elms lining the public way, and many a cultivated nursery and many a grassy paddock intervening between the scattered dwellings of the retired trader or the leisure-loving man of letters.

The countenance of this person, as it was directed upward with a pensive, wistful gaze toward the melancholy planet, receiving the full flood of its lustre, was singular for softness and attraction. He wore no covering on his head, and his luxuriant tresses of light brown hair, evenly parted on the foretop, hung down in silky waves quite to his shoulders. The hues of his complexion, delicately colored as a woman's, and the somewhat sleepy expression of his full gray eye, accorded well with the effeminate arrangement of his locks, and indeed entitled him to be considered eminently handsome; for there was so much

of intellect and of imagination in the forehead, low but expansive, and so many lines of thought about the slightly-sunken cheeks, now faintly traced and transient, but which would, with the advance of years, increase to furrows, that the softer traits, while adding to the beauty, detracted nothing from the dignity and manhood of his aspect. His form, though low and small, was yet compact and muscular, affording promise of that powerful agility which is often paramount even to superior strength in the use and skill of weapons. Neatly clad in a loose coat of dark gray cloth, with vest and hose of black, cut plainly without lace or fringe; and, above all, not wearing even the common walking-sword, at that time carried throughout Europe by all of gentle rank, the meditative loiterer would have excited little or no attention among the greater body of mankind, ever caught by the glitter, and deluded by the glare, but careless as it is undiscerning of true merit, when harbingered to its opinion by naught of pride or circumstance. He might have been an artisan or merchant of the city, but that the slouched hat, lying with a staff of ebony beside him on the wall, distinguished him from the flat-capped dwellers to the east of Temple Bar; while his hands, which were delicately white, and tender as a lady's, showed that they had never been exercised in the ungentle labor of a mechanic calling.

But, stronger even than these tokens, there was that vivid and inexplicable impress of exalted genius, that looking forth of the immortal spirit from the eyes, that strange mixture of quiet melancholy with high enthusiasm, pervading all his features, which must have made it evident to any moderately keen observer, that figure or decoration could be but of small avail when considered as the mere appendages to such a mind.

He stood a while in silence though his lips moved at intervals, perusing the bright wanderers of heaven with a gaze as fixed and yearning as if his spirit would have looked beyond them, through the empyrean, into the very tabernacle and abode of the Omnipotent. At length he spoke articulately, in a voice deep, slow, majestic, and melodious, but in the unconscious tones of one who medi-

tates or prays aloud, without reference or respect to aught external.

"Beautiful light," he said; "beautiful lamp of heaven —what marvel that the blinded and benighted heathen should ignorantly worship thee? What marvel that a thousand altars, in a thousand ages, should have sent up their fumes of adoration unto thee the mooned Ashtaroth, unto thee the Taurican Diana, unto thee the nightly visitant of the young-eyed Endymion? What marvel that to those who knew not, neither had they heard of the One, Uncreate, Invisible, Eternal, thou shouldst have seemed meet Deity to whom to bend the knee,—thou first-born offspring of his first-created gift—thou blessed emanation from his own celestial glory—when I, his humble follower, his ardent though unworthy worshipper,—when I, an honest though an erring christian, do strive in vain to wean my heart from love of thee; indoctrinating so my spirit that I may kiss the rod with which, I am assured too well, HE soon will chastise me, in changing the fair light, that glorious essence in which my soul rejoiceth, for one black, everlasting, self-imparted midnight? Yet so it shall be. A few more revolutions of these puissant planets,—a few more mutations of the sweet-returning seasons,—and to me there shall be no change again on earth forever! No choice between the fairest and the foulest! No difference of night or day! No charm in the rich gorgeousness of flowery summer above the sere and mournful autumn! No cheery aspect in the piled hearth of winter! No sweet communion with the human eye compassionate! No intercourse with the great intellects of old, dead, yet surviving still in their sublime and solid pages!"

He paused for a space, as though he were too deeply moved to trust his thoughts to language; but, after a moment, drawing his hand across his eyes—

"But if it be so," he continued, "as I may not doubt it will—if his fiat be pronounced against me of dark corporeal blindness, what duty yet remains? What—but to labor that the blindness be not mental also? What—but to treasure up even now, during my brief-permitted time, such stores of hoarded wisdom as may in part suffice, like to the summer-gathered riches of the industrious

and thrifty bee, to nourish and to cheer me at the coming of my sunless season? What — but to profit, even as best I may, by those good opportunities which his great mercy hath vouchsafed to me; to sow the seed even now, during the fertile autumn, that by his blessing it may swell and germinate during the brumal darkness of the approaching winter, and in his good time give forth to light a crop improved and gloriously surpassing that from which it sprung? What — but to give thanks alway, and to praise the tender-heartedness and love of Him, to whom it were no harder task to plunge the mind in lunatic and senseless stupor, than to seal up the fount of light to the poor eye. Of Him, who, giving all the thousand blessings I enjoy, judges it fitting to deprive me but of one, haply that from its single loss others may fructify, and bear good harvest to my use? Wherefore, oh merciful and mighty One, be it unto me as thou willest, and thou only. And oh! above all things, be it unto me, as now, so alway, humbly to cry, and happily, Thy will be done."

Even as the pious scholar brought his meditations to a close, the footsteps of some person approaching, though still unseen, through the mazes of the shrubbery, were heard upon the crisp and crackling gravel; and, ere he had resumed his hat, which was steeple-crowned and of the puritanic fashion, the intruder made his appearance, in the guise of an humbly-clad and grave-eyed serving-man, who announced in phrase ungarnished by much form of reverence toward his master, the presence of three gentlemen within, praying to speak with him.

"In faith," returned the other, "in faith, good Andrew, 'tis an unseasonable hour for visitants! Who be these gentles?"

"Master Cromwell is among them," answered the attendant; "but the rest I know not, save that I heard the name of St. John pass between them. They await your coming in the summer parlor."

Without farther query or reply, the scholar, as if satisfied that his presence was indeed required, traversed the garden with quick steps; and entering the house, a small but cheerful dwelling, through an entrance hung round with maps and charts of statistics or chronology, passed to

the chamber in which his guests expected him. It was a pleasant room, with a bay-window looking upon the garden, but cheaply decorated with hangings of green serge, to which a splendid organ, by the first maker of the day, and a choice collection of rare books, several of the number being manuscripts on vellum of great worth, afforded a remarkable contrast. In the recess formed by the window there stood a reading-desk, curiously carved in old black oak, with cushions of green velvet, somewhat the worse for wear, supporting a noble folio Bible in the Greek text of Geneva. The table was loaded with a heterogeneous mass of books and papers, an original manuscript of the Bacchæ of Euripides, reposing on a Hebrew copy of the Septuagint, and a stray duodecimo of Petrarch's sonnets, marking the place at which the reader had half-closed the pages of a huge tome of controversial divinity; while, on a marble slab opposite the chimney, lay a couple of foils, with their wire masks and gloves, partially hidden by the draperies of a threadbare mantle of black velvet; a violin, a guitar, some written music, and, peering out from beneath the whole, the iron basket-hilt and glittering scabbard of a heavy broadsword.

In this the student's sanctum, he found the three gentlemen who had been announced, evidently engaged in whispered conversation of deep import, for they did not perceive the presence of their host, till he had stood for a moment or two almost beside them. He had thus ample opportunity of examining their persons, by the light of a brazen lamp of antique form, with several burners, which hung from the ceiling immediately above the abstracted group. Nearly opposite the door, with his searching eyes fixed upon another of the company, who was speaking with considerable emphasis, though in an under tone, stood the same individual who had assisted Arden on the night of his adventure near to Royston; wearing the very garb in which he had appeared on that occasion, save that, for his riding-boots, he had substituted a pair of coarse gray woollen stockings, drawn tight to the mid-thigh, with ill-blacked shoes of calf-skin, laced to the instep, and bearing neither rose nor buckle.

The speaker, to whose words he was giving careful

heed, was a tall and slender person, handsomely, though gloomily attired in a full suit of black, with silken hose and velvet cloak to match, a mourning rapier hanging at his side, though evidently worn for fashion rather than for use. His countenance, though not of pleasant favor, much less such as could be termed handsome, was nevertheless one from which men could not easily withdraw their eyes, possessing attributes of unquestionable talent, though accompanied by an expression which none so dull but they would wish to fathom. His eyes, which were large and black, had a bright and flashing glance when under the influence of excitement, almost painful to the beholder; while a continual, and, as it would seem, involuntary sneer, sat on his thin and writhing lip. His hair, black as the raven's wing, was long and curling, though not worn after the flowing fashion of the cavaliers; but the most remarkable trait of his aspect was the immovable gloom which overshadowed his dark saturnine features with a cloud so constant, that it has been recorded of him, that seldom, even in his moments of hilarity, was he beheld to smile.

The remaining person of the trio was a finer and more comely man than either of his comrades; fairly proportioned, though not above the middle height, with a brow rather full than lofty, a quick and penetrating eye, and an intelligent expression, thoughtful rather than grave, and with no touch of sternness or morosity on his noble features, lighted up, as they were from time to time, by a smile of singular and cheerful sweetness. He was habited as became a gentleman, in a rich garb of marone-colored velvet, his costly sword suspended from a scarf of good white taffeta, and a white feather in his beaver; the whole, though plain enough, if compared with the luxurious bravery of the cavaliers, whose dresses would oftentimes have been too cheaply rated at a year's income of their patrimony, conveying an idea of absolute gayety, when viewed beside the simple habiliments of his fellow-visitors. After he had surveyed this group for a few moments' space, satisfied apparently with the survey, the master of the house stepped forward, startling them slightly by his motion, and cutting short their converse.

"Give you good evening, Master Cromwell," he said, addressing himself to the most slovenly-apparelled of the company; "it shames me to have caused you wait my coming."

"Not so, good sir," returned the other; "it is we rather who have trespassed on your studies, coming thus at an hour surely unseasonable. But, of a truth, I had forgotten—I pray you, Master Milton," for it was no other than the immortal poet, who had deplored, in such heartfelt yet unrepining language, the approach of that terrible calamity, which had already been predicted to him by the first physicians of the day as the sure consequence of his persisting in his arduous and unremitted labors,—"I pray you, Master Milton, know these most worthy and God-fearing gentlemen! This," motioning with his hand toward the taller and more gloomy figure, "this is my good friend, Master Oliver St. John; and this, my well-beloved and trusty cousin, honest John Hampden."

"Of a truth, Master Cromwell," replied the poet—in those days better known by his magnificent and stately prose, for a controversial writer of unequalled power, than by the slight though beautiful effusions of poetry which hitherto he had cast forth merely as the erratic sports of leisure moments, stolen from graver studies, and not yet as the sublime continuous soarings of his unrivalled genius—"of a truth, Master Cromwell, I owe you more of thanks than I am wont to offer, that you have brought to my poor dwelling these, the most constant and the noblest cultivators of that fair vineyard, to the renewal and reform of which I, too, an humble fellow-tiller, have devoted my unworthy labors!"

And he turned to the companions of his friend, esteemed already by all the worshippers of freedom as the wisest, the purest, and the best of her adorers! — as the pilots, who might alone be trusted to hold the shattered helm of state aright, amid the terrors, the confusion, and the storm of the approaching crisis! — as the champions, who had already reared the banner of undaunted opposition to all that was corrupt, or bigoted, or arbitrary, in religious or in civil rule! — as the leaders, who, above all others, were endowed with the talent, and the worth, and,

more than these, with the unflinching energy to wring the iron sceptre of usurped prerogative from the high hand that wielded it with such despotic sway! He greeted them with words savoring more of courteous deference than of that plain-spoken and uncompromising brevity, on the use of which his party prided themselves so deeply in their intercourse of man with man. There was, however, nothing of vain or worldly adulation, much less of that fawning sycophancy, that low servile man-worship, for which the courtiers of the day were so deservedly contemned by the stern Puritans, in his frank though reverential bearing.

After a few seconds spent in civilities, which were accepted as the befitting homage of one surpassing intellect to others, though in a different sphere, of not inferior merit, homage, degrading not the giver, while it added to the real dignity of the receiver, the party fell into the ordinary demeanor of men familiar, if not with the persons, at least with the minds and principles each of the other; and the conversation flowed as quietly on the accustomed topics of the times as though the speakers had been in the daily habit of mingling in the same social intercourse. There was, however, not only nothing of levity or humor, but nothing of common import or everyday occurrence, in the interchanged ideas of those high spirits, devoted, one and all, to the same pursuit of patriotism, and equally engrossed in the quick-succeeding incidents of fearful and pervading interest, which rendered every hour of that eventful year a great historic epoch.

"Have ye received aught new from Ireland," inquired the poet—"ye of the lower house, touching this perilous and damnable rebellion?"

"Ay, of a surety have we!" answered Cromwell, "full confirmation — full, ay, and overflowing all that we had heard before!"

"All Ulster is in one light blaze," cried St. John, his dark eye flashing with indignant fire; "the forts all captured, and that most subtle villain, Phelim O'Neil, wading knee-deep — with thirty thousand fanatic and phrensied Papists—knee-deep in Protestant and English gore! Connaught and Leinster revelling in red-handed massacre, and

the five counties of the Pale, arrayed by the lords-justices to quell the insurrection, united to their brother rebels!"

"None may conceive the horrors—none may recount or enumerate the sufferings—of the wretched Protestants," continued Hampden, a deep shade of melancholy settling down on his fine lineaments; "at the least reckoning, twenty thousand of our brethren, men, women, and children, yea, the very infants at the breast, have perished! No insult, no atrocity, that Romish perfidy could plan, or Irish cruelty perform—no last extremity of famine, cold, or torture, has been spared to their defenseless victims by the barbarian Papists—the very priests setting the torch of midnight conflagration to the planter's dwelling, and hounding on their furious followers to massacre and havoc?"

"But the king, fair sirs?"

"Well hast thou said, John Milton," interrupted the harsh voice of Cromwell before the other had concluded his inquiry; "well hast thou said and truly! 'tis of that man of Belial! ay, root and branch of him, and his self-seeking carnal cavaliers!"

"It is, we fear, too true—" said Hampden, in reply to the anxious looks of the attentive listener; "it is, we fear, too true! O'Neil, in his dark proclamation, boasts openly his own authority from the great seal of Scotland. Sir William St. Leger, trusty alike and brave, hath, as we learn, dismissed his levies, and laid down the arms he had assumed on the first outbreak of the rebels, at sight of a commission, with Charles Stuart's manual sign, held by that murderous bigot, Lord Musquerry."

"And last, not least," sneered Oliver St. John, "Mac Mahon hath confessed, at shrewd solicitation of the rack, that the original scheme of this rebellion was brought to Ireland from our gracious king and governor, by Dillon and the members of the late committee."

"Of a truth," said Cromwell," in reply to the words of his milder cousin, "of a truth, there may be cause for *fear*, ay, and for grief—yet wherefore? Verily 'tis a hard thing to rejoice, to rejoice in the midst of slaughter and abomination! Yet who shall deem or boast himself to know of that which is to come, save He that holdeth the end, I say the end and the accomplishment of all

things, in the hollow of his hand? But I will tell you this — yea, but mistake me not, — this will I avouch to you, that *I* fear not, but do rejoice! 'T is a sad thing, in truth, that an anointed king, even a king in Israel, should arm his hand against his people, and turn away his countenance from the well-beloved of the Lord, inclining his ear likewise unto the idolatries of the beast, and unto the charmings of the Moabitish woman; yea, and pour out the vials of his wrath upon the heads of the sons of righteousness! But, of a surety, it is not for a man to judge save thus — for I will speak even as it is put into my mouth, — save *thus* — that to a man foreweaponed and forewarned, less dangerous is an open enemy—yea, if he be mightier by tenfold,—than one who lurketh privily beneath the vesture of a friend, looking in secret whom he may devour!"

"Forewarned indeed you are," replied the poet, musingly, "and your own fault 't will be if you be not foreweaponed likewise; for, in good sooth, I do believe the lives of none are safe—the lives and liberties of none, who dare uplift their voices in defense of England's liberty or the church's purity."

"And is it not to this end," cried Oliver, "and is it not to this end that we are watching, even now, with our loins girded, and our light burning, watching unto the protection of those that are defenseless, and unto the enlightening of those that sit in darkness? And is it not to this end that we have now come to you, John Milton, trusting to gain a strong ally—even a valiant, and a heart-whole, and a spirit-serving soldier! — seeking to learn from you — so far as it is for man to learn of man, yet neither confident in worldly wisdom, which is ignorance before the Lord, nor relying altogether on the judgment of a fellow-worm, how excellent soever he may be in the gifts of carnal knowledge,—seeking, I say, to learn from you the character and principles of one with whom we do believe that you so long have communed as to know the thoughts of his heart, ay, and to interpret the workings of his inward man!"

"Such is indeed our object," continued Hampden, while St. John fixed his searching eye upon the beautiful

features of the listener with keen and interested scrutiny; "such is indeed our object in this untimely visit. We have but now received intelligence of the decease of that shrewd counsellor and honest patriot, Elias Chaloner, the fellow-townsman of my worthy cousin Cromwell, and lately member for the godly town of Huntingdon; and, with this same intelligence, the great charge has been laid upon us, by the zealous burghers of the place, of commending to their choice a person who shall honorably fill the post of him that is departed."

"And how? you would ask, John Milton," Cromwell broke in, "for I can read the query on your brow—how, you would ask, can you assist us in this matter? Verily *thus* — for it has been suggested to our souls when we were seeking out the Lord in prayer, yea, wrestling with him in the spirit, that he should guide us to a sure election,—it was—I tell you truth, I do profess,—borne in upon the ears of our minds, as with an audible and spoken voice, 'Ye shall call to aid the man—even the young man—Edgar Arden—'"

"With whom," interrupted St. John, evidently tired of the prolix, verbose haranguing of the other, "with whom, as we are well assured, you, Master Milton, have mingled much in foreign travel, having thereby good opportunity to judge of his opinions and to learn his heart. We would hear from you, therefore, worthy sir, whether this gentleman of high extraction, born of a race devotedly, I had well-nigh said *slavishly*, loyal — whether this gentleman be indeed, as we would wish to find him, a firm, uncompromising lover of his country — one who would pledge himself, and keep his plight religiously, to advance the views and serve the interests of our party! May it please you, tell us fully what of yourself you know, and what may be your judgment of this your fellow-traveller; and, above all, whether he may be wrought, and by what means, to further our purposes!"

"For years," replied the poet, after a moment's pause, "for years have I been wont to read the living minds of men with even more of study than I have expended on their embalmed and written thoughts—for years!—and never — I can say it honestly and freely, for I do believe

I know his inmost aspirations, even as I am conscious of my own—never have I found, or even read of a clearer head, combined with a truer heart, than that of Edgar Arden. A worshipper of wisdom, of liberty, of truth, as pure and as fervently devoted as the great spirits of the old republics! A scholar in the study, and that of the ripest—an orator in the forum, strong, stirring, and persuasive—a soldier in the field, well tried, and as well proven! A worshipper of all that is beautiful, but one who sees no beauty save in virtue! A christian, fervent and sincere, yet tolerant, and of much charity! Ambitious—but ambitious only to do good! If ever there was born a man wholly unselfish, that man is Edgar Arden. Such—and on my judgment, I think, you may rely—such is the man whom you would take into your counsels. Gain him, then, gain him, if you may, for certainly, if Edgar Arden could achieve aught to benefit his country, though every hope, every feeling, every passion of his soul were enlisted to oppose it, certainly he would tread hope, feeling, passion, into the very dust beneath his feet. He has a head so clear, he cannot fail to *see* the right; he has a heart so true, he would not fail — though at the price of all he holds most dear — to *follow* it. Beware, however, beware, if ye decide to seek him, how you show aught of doubt, much less suspicion! Proffer to him the seat for Huntingdon untrammelled! say not a word of party; not a word of opposition to the court; make not one condition; ask not one pledge!—for had you heaven itself to tender him, and were to tender it, so *bribing* him—ay, were it even to act well—my life! he would refuse even heaven! If, therefore, you can resolve unpledged to trust him, seek not to sound his views; for as well might you essay to fathom the most central depths of ocean; seek not to bind his actions—for as well might you go forth to chain the subtle and pervading lightning; but proffer to him, in plain terms, the seat, at the free choice of the burghers, and if he do accept it, as well I trust he will, be sure there is no man in England that better knows the duties of a member in the Commons House of Parliament, or will discharge them more truly!"

"You have described," replied the calm and medita-

tive Hampden, "you have indeed described a man, such as there are but few on this side the grave! Your words, too, tally well with the surmises I have formed from his known actions!"

"And would you then," asked the moody St. John, "would you then set so great a matter on the casting of a die? Do you not know that even now we have but a majority—not over-strong nor over-certain?—that many have been already won or put to silence—that Hyde and his moderate partisans daily gain strength, and only lack occasion to join the court in open and unblushing servitude? Know you not that Falkland wavers, and that, if he go over, ten votes at least will instantly apostatize? and would you then elect this cavalier, for such in truth he is, on vague hopes and uncertain indications?"

"I said not so," replied Hampden, quickly; "I said not so! but only that I believe him wise and honest! Farther I will say now, that—if, on any terms, we shall decide to recommend him to the choice of the electors—my voice is for so doing with nothing of restriction. If he be honest, it needs not to bind him by a promise—if otherwise, 't were madness to suppose that promises will bind him. But on this matter we will speak more anon—we have already trespassed over-long upon the leisure and the patience of our honorable host."

St. John replied not; and Cromwell, who had perhaps made up his mind already, had fallen into a long and rambling exposition of some doctrinal point, wholly remote from the subject in question, to which Milton listened with a tranquil smile playing about his well-turned lip, and with the aim apparently of discovering what was the meaning, if there indeed were any, of the wild and ill-digested oratory of the member for Cambridge, at this time just beginning to attract the notice of the house, though no one could perhaps assign a cause for his increasing influence.

For a short space the others spoke apart, warmly, though in an under tone—Hampden, as it seemed, urging on his grave confederate some dubious or unpalatable measure; the energy of his manner gradually rising, while the opposition of his friend waxed fainter, until the

habitual sneer departed from his lip, and the accustomed cloud partially yielded to an opener and more cheery aspect.

"Be it so!" he said at length, raising his voice, as the discussion was finished by his assent; "be it so, if you will—and, in faith, I believe you are in the right on 't! Now, Master Cromwell," he continued, turning toward him as he spoke, "it lacks but a scant hour of midnight, and our host's oil, I trow, is wont to lend its light to purposes of more importance than our farther converse! Give you good night, fair sir," he added, with a short inclination to the poet, as, gathering his cloak about him, he led his comrades, after brief ceremony, into the moonlit streets; while he, whom he had last addressed, applied himself, in solitary diligence, to the exercise of his pen, slight instrument of mightiest powers, whether for good or evil, and, in the hand of the philosopher, prime mover of more potent revolutions than its dread rival and confederate—the mortal sword.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WANDERER AT HOME.

O! what can be more blissful than to cast all care away,
When down the mind her burden throws to take it up no more,
What time, with foreign toils oppressed, our own familiar door
We open, to repose upon the long-regretted bed—
This, this it is that can alone all greatest cares repay!

CATULLUS. *Idyll* 19.

NONE can imagine, but they who have themselves been wanderers, expatriated, whether of choice or necessity it matters not, what it is to be sojourners not dwellers on the broad desert earth; what it is, in the midst of others, as dear, perhaps even dearer than those, who are still gathered, afar off, around the unforgotten fireside of their childhood, to have craved with an insatiate and yearning appetite the well-known aspect of the old home-places; to have languished for a father's blessing, a mother's

wistful eye, a sister's holy kiss; to have felt, with the patriotic Syrian, that "Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus," are truly to the exile, "better than all the waters of Israel."

None know, but they who, having experienced all this, have returned, after long wanderings, to those cherished scenes, what is the deep and tranquil happiness of being once again the centre of that old domestic circle; of receiving the fond welcome of every living thing—ay, even of the household dog, or superannuated horse, that yelps or whinnies in the fullness of his recognition; of lying down to rest beneath the very curtains, and on the very bed, which had so often wooed them to repose before they knew the bitterness of sin or sorrow.

Fully indeed, and far more sensibly than it is tasted by the common pilgrim of life's journey, did this impression of quiet happiness pervade the breast of Arden, as he leaned, gazing upon the familiar landscape, from out the open casement of his chamber, that chamber, which had never for a moment faded from his memory, with its oaken wainscoting and faded tapestries, its angular recesses, peopled by his youthful fantasy with lurking shapes of terror, its pleasant seats in the deep bay windows, its brazen-handled cabinets of quaint device, its bed with sculptured tester and dark hangings, and more than all, its old oak desk, with the velvet-bound and silver-studded bible, whence his long-lost and long-regretted mother had lessoned him so lovingly while he was yet a boy.

The moonlight lay upon the velvet park and tufted elms, as though it loved to sleep among that peaceful scenery; and if, at intervals, it shone reflected from the surface of some quiet water, it lingered even there with a half-shadowed lustre, not flashing out with bright gleams like the garish sunshine, but calmly harmonizing with the spirit of the place and hour. So clear, however, was the mellow light, that the graceful attitudes of the slumbering deer might be distinguished on the open lawns, and the pinion of the gliding owl seen to glance against the massy shadows of the surrounding forest. Yet now, although he gazed upon all that was most beautiful of

natural scenery, all that was most endeared to him by boyish recollections, although he was surrounded by the very objects that he had most earnestly desired to see, although he was at the very point which he but yesterday would have esteemed the summit of fruition, he was not altogether at ease. It is true, that he had found in her on whom his mind had dwelt most fondly and most frequently during his absence, the very being he had loved so fervently of yore, bearing no traces of the years which had elapsed, save in the ripening of her mind to excellent maturity, and in the rounding of her girlish figure into the exquisite proportions of young womanhood. It is true that the father, whom he had honored and obeyed with that old-fashioned filial reverence, which, ill betide the change! has long since passed away, together with the steel-hilted rapiers, and the somewhat formal courtesy of our progenitors, had welcomed him to his affections, a man yet in the prime of intellectual vigor. It is true that he had brought back to his native land a heart untainted by the follies and frivolities of foreign countries; a mind well satisfied, not by the baseless arguments of boyish prejudice, but by the strong convictions of experience, that his own earth-fast island was indeed the home best calculated for the seekers of that sweet domestic quietude, that fire side, church-going happiness, that calm enjoyment of the duties, the labors, and the pleasures of a country life, blent, as these ever are, with a romantic taste for the green fields and slumbering woodlands, the gentle river and the smooth hillside, which have at all times formed a feature so distinctive in the English character. But it is no less true, that even at the moment when his hand might have been said to grasp all that his soul desired, his spirit was disturbed, and his heart ill at ease.

It would be well, perhaps, in more respects than one, for men, if they could, in matters which agitate and distress the heart, depending on contingencies which they can neither control nor foresee, and but blindly and oftener erroneously than rightfully anticipate, resign themselves implicitly to that injunction of him who spoke as

never man spoke, that they "take no heed for the morrow."

For in taking heed, it is too true, that for the most part they but take to themselves sorrow and anxiety, disquieting themselves to no purpose, at the present, by striving to fathom the future, and lay out plans for their conduct which the chance of the next moment will, for the most part, render futile or impossible. Yet, in a mortal sense, obedience to this injunction is perhaps impossible — impossible at least to any man endowed with enough of intellect and mental vigor to perceive the connection between present causes and eventful effects — to foresee with prescient sagacity the crop which will spring up to-morrow from the seed laid in the ground to-day. For who could sit at ease, appreciating the full quality of each delicious viand, pleasantly debating on the flavor of each fragrant wine, knowing that the sword of Damocles was swinging by a single hair—and that, too, yielding at every instant to the weight—above his head?

Had it not been for this — had it been possible for Arden to seal up his eyes and close his ears against the evidence of what to-morrow must bring forth; had he lacked the wisdom to discover the future destinies of England, her vitals even now convulsed by the first throes of the incipient earthquake, or the patriotism to sympathize with the afflictions which, as that wisdom taught him, must ere another year befall his country, he might have surrendered himself to momentary pleasure, careless or ignorant of the approaching woe. And — so rare of occurrence, and so brief when they do occur, are the periods during human life even of comparative happiness — perhaps, had he so done, he had been able to look back in after days to more of sunny hours than he could count among the strange and mingled incidents of his eventful life.

But, constituted as he was, it was not in his power to fix his gaze on the bright present aspect of the things around him, without observing the huge melancholy clouds which were rising up on the political horizon, threatening to overshadow with their gloomy pall, and perhaps to overwhelm in the wild tempest they must soon

discharge, the feeble shallop of his own private fortunes, together with the stronger vessel of his country's liberties.

At an early period of his life a visitor of southern lands, where he had wandered, not to mark, only, the sunny skies and desolated fields, the ruined temples and the beautiful cascades, but to muse on the condition of the nations once so powerful and so degraded now; to ponder on their rise and fall; to draw deep lessons of the future from the contemplation of the past. He had learned to cherish liberty the more from having witnessed, if not himself endured, the wrongs, the misery, and the oppression of unlimited authority. Summoned of late by rumors, rife throughout the world, of present disagreement and coming strife between the king and parliament of his own country, he had returned to England at the instigation of his natural sense of duties, which forbade him to expend his energies of heart and hand in the service of a foreign prince, when both might be required to aid the better cause of liberty or loyalty, no less than at the dictates of those natural affections which, sooner or later, will point, as surely as the magnetic needle to the north, toward the home of childhood.

While on the journey, all his thoughts had been, nearly all, of joy—of that serene and moderate happiness which makes the days flow onward like a broad and tranquil river, fertilizing some fair plain, rich with the hopes of thousands, beautiful, but with an indescribable and unromantic beauty, presenting none of those wild charms, those scenes at once sublime and lovely to the eye, which mark the course of far-famed torrents amid the savage glens of moorland, moss, and mountain, but leaving on the mind a mingled sentiment of gratitude and bliss that will be fresh and vivid when the sterner memory of its rivals shall have yielded to oblivion.

His spirit had looked forward to a long perspective of sunshiny years, not to be degraded by the selfish sloth of luxury, not to be wasted in the mere sports of the field, which, useful, ay, and ennobling in their tendencies, when partaken but as a relief to grave and solid duties, so surely brutalize if they be exalted to a business and a constant

occupation, not to be dreamed away in apathetic musings and would-be philosophy, but to be dignified by high and patriotic labors, by the cultivation of the sciences and arts, by the promotion of public virtue and domestic worth, to be enlivened by the gay communion of the noble and the good, to be softened by the sweet charities, the endearing ties, the holy sympathies that clasp within their pale the members of a happy family, and to be closed at length by a calm death-bed amid weeping friends, and by a grave beneath the elms of the ancestral churchyard, still to be decked with flowers, and pointed out to far posterity as the long home of one whose life had been a course, to which death had but brought the consummation, of unbending honor.

Such, when the chalky cliffs loomed white and lofty, such were the fond anticipations, the imaginations, never perhaps to be realized, which poured their gilded halo round his heart, and when he felt his foot once more securely planted on the parent soil, when all those gushing influences of mingled ecstasy and tenderness swept in an overwhelming torrent over his whole being, he deemed that all his hopes were on the point of being gratified, that he was indeed about to be the happiest of men. The rumors of evil seemed to fade away; the menaces of political discord, perchance even of civil strife, to mutter only at a distance, if not unheard, at least unworthy to create solicitude; the fears that would at times arise unbidden, clouding with darker shades the bright hues of his mental painting, were all forgotten; and when he arrived, as he had done that evening, at the dear home of his boyhood, when he perceived the mighty pleasure that lightened forth from every feature of his admiring father, when he found himself revelling in the manifest affections of his destined bride, and knew that she partook of the same rapture, and in no less degree, he for a while abandoned his whole soul to the tide of feeling. He suffered himself to be carried away by his enjoyment of the present, careless and fearless of the future; he felt, perhaps for the first time of his life, during those brief hours, that elastic buoyancy of temper which seems to tread the earth with winged steps, about to soar aloft, insensible to

anything that may depress, reckless of all that may oppose, that rapt intoxication of the spirit, which is succeeded so often by the contrary extreme of listless, sad despondency, that, in the northern parts of Britain, it has given rise to a pervading superstition, to an undoubting creed, that such is the forerunner and the omen, not of a causeless gloom, but of a coming evil.

However this may be,—and I know not, that I have not observed something in the course of circumstances, that does palliate the superstition,—it nevertheless is certain, that scarcely had he retired from that delicious intercourse to the seclusion of his own apartment, ere the exhilaration, which had almost surprised himself while he indulged it, gave place, first, to an uncertain sense of restlessness, then to a consciousness of some impending evil, increasing in distinctness moment after moment, till it assumed at length the shape of an anxiety, if not a fear, positive, well-defined, and, alas! but too well grounded. Nothing, indeed, but the whirl of mingled sensations, leaving room for nothing of serious meditation, could have, even thus far, blinded Arden to the difficulties and the dangers of his future course. The boasted loyalty of his forefathers, their fond devotion, stronger almost than life, to the king, not as a person, but as a portion, and that the most important, of the state, their orthodox and sturdy zeal, condemning all as sectaries and fanatics who differed in the least from the established canons of the church, their prejudiced affection for all that was antique, even for antique error! their holding up all those who would improve or alter, with the most diffident and sparing hand, as innovators on the good old times, as levellers of rank and order, as iconoclasts of the holy constitution, as traitors to their monarch, to their country, to their God! All these, he could not but remember, had been the principles impressed upon his dawning intellect as the very elixir of political wisdom, as the examples which must point the steps of every Arden, as the doctrines for the maintenance of which he must, if ever called upon to do so, rejoicingly expend his fortune and his blood.

All these, he could not but foresee, must still, according to all human calculations, be the favorite maxims of

his father, who, as he felt in contradiction of those hopes, which, even in spite of hope, he knew unfounded, would be too likely to deem the slightest deviation from the footsteps of his idols as the worst apostacy!—the most respectful opposition to the arbitrary will of the misguided sovereign, as flat rebellion!—the most moderate interference in behalf of liberal views and privileges of the people, as a banding, against the legitimate aristocracy of the land, with all that is low, and sordid, and degraded!—too likely, in short, to deem the part which Edgar felt already to be the only one he could in honor or in honesty espouse, a base abandonment of his natural position—a shameful dereliction from the principles and virtues of his race—a crime not to be atoned for, even by exclusion from his heart and expulsion from the home of his fathers!

And had he been able even heretofore and at a distance to close his eyes against this fatal certainty, he must indeed have been both blind and deaf of heart had he not marked the words of blasting sarcasm, of fierce and fiery hatred, which flashed forth as oft as any casual mention intervened of those who had stood forth to check the headlong declination of the English church toward dreaded Popery, or the more rapid increase of prerogative toward absolute and autocratic sway. But they had not escaped him. Although unnoted, or at least unremarked, amid the free and flowing conversation of that first evening, and unable for the time to dash his most unusual exuberance of animal spirits, they had sunk deep into his heart, and now they rose in long array against him, ghastly and gloomy shapes, reproaching him with his unnatural and foolish joy, and pointing to an endless course of tribulation and of sorrow.

Nor was this all!—though this had been enough to overshadow a temperament more sanguinely inclined than that of Edgar Arden, determined as he was to follow that which he himself should deem the wise, the upright, and the honorable way of action, though such should be avenged by the prostration of all his fancy's idols, by the ruin of his fortunes, by the blighting of his nearest and dearest aspirations, and, more intolerable far than all be-

side, by the forfeiture of that high opinion which his merit had induced, and the frustration of that just expectance which his promise had excited in the bosoms of his friends and kinsmen.

Nor was this all! For, as he pondered now in the lone stillness of the night, as he reviewed with a dispassionate, keen-sighted judgment the occurrences of the past day, as he recurred to every word that had fallen from the lips to which he looked for love, and life, and all that can make life happy, to every expression which had wreathed in smiles, or clouded with disapprobation, the soul-fraught lineaments of Sibyl, he could not bless himself with the conviction, scarce even with the hope, that she was not, although in a less stern degree, a holder of the same ancestral prejudice, a worshipper of the same creed, hallowed as it was by much that naturally would call forth the sympathies of a mind imbued with all the poetry of feudal recollections, not as yet faded from the earth, by the high chivalrous devotion, the noble and unselfish confidence, the enthusiastic valor, the unsullied memory and cloudless glory, of the days when kings were loved as second only to the gods—when loyalty was regarded as a virtue among men, in the same rank with piety toward heaven.

Whither, then, had fallen his exulting fancies—whither had flown his visionary prospects of a useful and a happy life, of an honored and regretted end — if the paths of happiness and honor were destined to run diverse? If, his heart burning with the pure and hallowed flame of liberty, his head clearly appreciating the miserable and abhorred aims of the rash man who wore the crown of England, his whole soul glowing with patriotic ardor, he must either prostitute his energies to make what to him seemed the worse appear the better cause, must either lift his voice to justify and defend time-honored wrong and new-devised oppression, must either edge the weapon of the despot with all the powers of his arm, or, following the dictates of his own conscience, ranking himself among the vindicators of the constitution to its early purity, among the assertors of a legitimate and tempered freedom — as far removed from the wild anarchy and license of falsely styled republics, as

from the forced obedience and intolerant rule of arbitrary governors—must be content to sacrifice all that his heart held worthy its acceptance! if, in short, he must act a part dishonest and unworthy, in order to gain those ordinary means of happiness, to which none so lowly but they aspire; or must surrender every hope, nay, every possibility of earthly bliss, at the inflexible commands of duty and of honor?

These were the dark reflections into which the mind of Arden had relapsed, as he stood alone, gazing from the lattice of his chamber into the bosom of the night, profiting by, if not enjoying, the first moments of calm solicitude, the first opportunity for quiet and heart-searching meditation, that had fallen to his lot since he had been numbered once again among the dwellers beneath the oaken shades of his paternal Woodleigh. Nor, as the hours of night passed, not unheralded by musical chimes from the old belfry, and the moonlight waned in the peaceful sky, did his wild thoughts and sad forebodings give way to aught of weariness; the more he pondered, and the less able did he seem to find the slightest clew to guide his footsteps through the gloomy labyrinth of the future, the longer he sat gazing on the pallid stars, and the less he felt disposed for slumber, till at length, the spirit moving, as it were, too rapidly, and the blood coursing through his veins too fiercely to permit the body to remain inactive, he arose, scarce conscious that he did so, and paced the oaken floor, backward and forth, with slow, irregular steps, the livelong night.

Gradually the coming of the early twilight dappled the darkness of the eastern sky; a bird or two, of those which had securely roosted under the ivy-curtained eaves, awaking with a lively chirrup, gave notice of the dawn; and anon the calm and colorless light of an autumnal morning crept into Arden's chamber, dispelling from its every nook the massy shadows which had nestled, like unholy spirits, in those deep recesses, beneath the partial influence of the moon. But all unnoted by its occupant had those successive changes circled the firmament; and when the sound of voices and footsteps, passing to and fro in the corridors, announced the return of those bright hours allotted to so

much of human toil and sorrow, he absolutely started in surprise, and almost doubted whether it could indeed be morning, that had stolen on his waking dreams, and found him still a watcher.

With something like a smile at his own abstraction, he turned to change and alter his discomposed attire; and as he dashed the pure cold water over his throbbing temples, and bathed his feverish hands, he perceived that its refreshing coolness pervaded not his body only, but calmed and soothed his mind; and when the merry bell summoned its hearers to that most unrestrained and sociable of meetings, the morning meal, he descended the old staircase, gazing on its walls, decked with time-honored banners, and glittering with starry groups of weapons, and on its landing-places guarded by complete panoplies of steel, standing erect with advanced arms and lowered visors, as if still tenanted by the strong frames that had supported them of yore amid the din of battle, if not with a heart at rest, at least with a countenance that bore no traces of the conflict still at work within.

On entering the summer parlor, as such rooms were termed in the quaint language of the time, wherein meet preparations for a breakfast, far more solid than are used in these degenerate days, had been already made, he found his destined bride alone, in a projecting oriel window, seated on the broad-cushioned ottoman which circled the recess, with a light frame before her, filled with a gorgeous Indian silk, on which her art had traced some fair embroideries, yet incomplete; but, though the many-colored skeins assorted within reach, and the well-filled needle between her taper-fingers, showed that she had commenced her feminine and graceful occupation, the thoughtful attitude of her head, languidly propped on her left hand, while the right lay motionless on the rich texture, belied her fancied industry. So noiselessly had Edgar's step fallen on the soft Turkey carpet, that she did not perceive his entrance; and so beautiful was the picture of still life which she afforded to her lover's gaze, that he lingered for a moment ere his voice should rouse her into animation.

A flood of morning luster streamed downward with a

golden hue, caught from the teinted panes, upon her glossy hair and pure complexion, circling her entire form with a halo of rich light, not unlike that with which the painters of the Romish school are wont to dignify their female saints and martyrs. The outlines of her beautiful shape were mellowed, as it were, and shrouded partially by the hazy beams of sunshine which fell in oblique lines between her person and the observer's eye. Her luxuriant tresses folded plainly about the contour of her small and classic head, without ornament or gem of any kind, and the exceeding repose, if it might not be termed melancholy, of her sweet features, gave, together with the accidents of light and shade, a madona-like and sainted aspect to her figure, which would have enchained an artist with no less of fascination than it exercised, from different reasons, over the mind of Arden. As he approached, her delicate ear detected him; she turned her head, and springing to her feet,—"Dear Edgar," she exclaimed, her eye discovering with instinctive quickness the trace of melancholy left upon his lineaments, however faintly, by his nightly musings; "Dear Edgar, you are ill at ease; nay, smile not; 'tis a ghastly smile, not of your own expression! you are ill at ease — have passed a sleepless night— "

"Sweet Sibyl," he replied, with a wan smile, and gently pressing her extended hand, "you are indeed a keen observer; too keen, believe me. How should I be but well and happy, surrounded thus by all I love most tenderly?"

"How indeed, Edgar?" she answered, even more sadly than before. "How indeed — if you *do* love so tenderly? But ill at ease you are, and have been sleepless. All night long have I heard your heavy strides upon the chamber floor, and those not regular and measured as your wont, but fitful and uncertain. So do not pass the happy their first night beneath the roof that saw their birth."

"*If* I do love, Sibyl,— *if!*" he exclaimed, with deep, almost reproachful energy; "but, in good truth, I am a poor dissembler, and could scarcely feign, were it to win even your heart, Sybil; and, for it seems I must confess me, I am somewhat, though slightly, ill at ease—"

"I knew it at a glance," she interrupted him; "and

wherefore then conceal it? — Good Dr. Masters, though somewhat past his prime, still ministers, and skilfully, to his familiar patients; an hour will have him here —" and she moved hastily toward a silver hand-bell, which stood, with books, and drawings, and a lady's lute, upon a delicate cabinet of tortoise-shell and marquetry.

"Nay! nay!" he cried, gently arresting her, "I meant not so! Be not alarmed, dear Sibyl, mine is a robust frame, not oft or easily affected by aught of feebleness or ailment. My mind hath been of late somewhat overwrought; but a few days, consumed in the enjoyment of home-happiness and the delights of your society, shall speedily restore me. Look not so grave, so sad, I beseech you."

"Oh, Edgar," she interrupted him again, "tell me, if you do love me, tell me all! long years have we been parted — parted, as I have hoped — as, from your kind and fervent letters, I have well believed — in body, not in soul! and is it now, oh, is it to be thus? Are we to be but more divided, when we are more together? Have we but met to be more widely and more coldly severed! Oh! if you love me, let me know your griefs! Who before me should know? — or who, as I, would share them?"

"All — all," he answered, in the hollow voice of one who struggles vainly with his feelings, forcing a smile as faint as a December's sunbeam,—"you shall share all, grief, happiness, life, death, eternity! — All, all, sweet Sibyl, if indeed you be so minded! From you I have had, I will have no secrets; but now, I do assure you, I am not in grief, how should I? Something of gloomy thought may have come over me, something of moody sadness, causeless and senseless, such as will float at times across the brains of all who think — as I do — deeply. But no, Sibyl, no; I am not unhappy! Not for the proudest station upon earth would I exchange this fond proximity to you — not for the universal blast of the world's approbation would I barter that bright tear, shed for me, Sibyl, or that yet brighter smile that chases it. Cheer up, my own, own love; we will talk more of this anon, for lo! there comes my father!"

And as he spoke, attired in hunter's garb of green,

booted to the mid-thigh, with bugle-horn and wood-knife usurping the place of rapier and of poniard, and with two gallant stag-hounds at his heel, the noble veteran entered.

"Alert — alert!" he cried, with a gay smile; "you of young blood! Methought I was myself full early stirring, but here are you, in rising as in all else, beforehand with me. What ho! you loitering knaves, hurry our breakfast! 'Tis a rare morning, Edgar; a soft mild wind, a heavy dew last eventide, and the clouds gently rising. Old Stavely tells me he has harbored a right hart of grease, a stag of ten—and I have sent out riders these four hours ago to rouse the country. The Outrams will be here anon; you mind the Outrams, boy, your college mates of yore, and now right noble gallants; and Atherstone, of Ashstead Hall, and old Lord Middleton, with his brave sons! Friends all — true friends, though some of them, I doubt, almost forgotten! But, 'fore George, we will make a day of it!"

Thus the old man ran on, overlooking in his light-hearted cheerfulness the evident abstraction of his listeners, although they rallied up enough of animation to maintain some sort of conversation during their hasty meal, which scarce was ended, when Sir Henry started from his seat.

"See! see!" he cried, as a fair cavalcade swept past the windows, their plumes waving in the light west wind, spurs jingling, and steeds curvetting — "see! they are here, even now; and lo! the pack!" As, with their attendant huntsmen and half a score of prickers, splendidly mounted on blood horses, in forest jerkins sumptuously laced, round caps, and huge French horns encircling their shoulders, restrained by many an echoing shout and many a clanging lash, some twenty couple of tall northern blood-hounds came trotting slowly up the lawn, in all that accuracy of condition and perfection of detail which has, in every period of her history, been so distinctive of the field-sports of England!

"Fly, Sibyl — fly, my lassie," cried the impatient veteran. "Do on your riding gear right speedily. Ariel is champing on his bits even now to summon you! Edgar and I meanwhile will look to our guests in the great hall. Dally not, girl, I pray you; the sun is shrouded even now,

and the scent will lie most bravely. I would not, to be Prince of Wales, lose such a morning! What ho! my jovial roisters," he continued in a louder tone, striding into the huge vaulted hall through one door, as his fair niece vanished at the other. "What ho! my jovial roisters," addressing the laughing group who waited his arrival. "Here have you an old friend, whom some of you perchance have not as yet forgotten." And with a prouder air and more exulting smile, he introduced his gallant son, unseen for many a year, to his admiring friends.

A short half hour flitted pleasantly away in heartfelt greetings and gay converse of light moment, but lively, joyous, and sincere. Then every high-plumed hat was doffed, and every voice was lowered, as Sibyl Arden, with her attendant maidens, meetly equipped for the field, entered the hall! "To horse! to horse!" and the ladies were assisted to their velvet side-saddles, by favored cavaliers, and the gallants vaulted to their saddles, and threw their chargers on their haunches by dint of curb and spur, and drew their forms to the most graceful attitude, as with courtly merriment and sylvan music they swept away through shadowy avenues and over shaven lawns, to the wilder coppices and more secluded glades of chase and forest.

CHAPTER V.

A STAGHUNT INTERRUPTED.

> I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
> When, in the woods of Crete they bayed the bear
> With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
> Such gallant chiding; for beside the groves,
> The skies, the fountains, every region near
> Seemed all one mutual cry; I never heard
> So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
>
> A MIDSUMMER'S-NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE hunt was at its height. The noble stag — which had been harbored on the previous night in a deep swampy thicket, situate at the extreme western verge of

the chase, and adjoining a wild tract of semi-cultivated moorland, disdaining to seek refuge in the recesses of the devious woodland, had broken covert gallantly, as the first crash of deep-mouthed music burst from his stanch pursuers. Then, clearing by a gigantic effort the rough park palings, he had taken to the open country, crossing hill and dale in a line scarce less direct than the crow's flight, and at a pace that, ere an hour had passed, reduced the number of those who followed the now mute and panting hounds from a score or two of fearless horsemen to a scant half-dozen of the boldest and best-mounted riders. The ladies of the party had long since been thrown out, scarcely indeed having cantered a half mile along the nearest road, after the hounds had left the confines of the park; but still the foremost of the field, with all the hair-brained courage of a boy, and all the deep sagacious foresight of a veteran sportsman, rode old Sir Henry Arden; his manly features flushed with the excitement of his healthful exercise, and his gray hair floating in the current of air created by his own swift motion, as, cap in hand, he cheered the laggards of the pack with a voice that had lost nothing of its full-toned roundness.

At length, in a sequestered dell, clothed on each hand with a dense growth of underwood feathering its rocky and precipitous declivities, down which a sandy road wound in short toilsome curves, and watered by a bright and brawling rivulet, hard pressed and weary, the brave quarry turned to bay. The deep note of the leading hound changed to a shrill and savage treble as he viewed his prey, and at the same instant the loud death-halloo rang from the exulting lips of the old baronet as he caught and comprehended the import of that sharp yell. Another minute brought him to the brink of a wide pool, embayed between rough cliffs of sandstone, and overlooked by a gnarled and leafless oak, on the highest branch of which a solitary raven sat, unmoved by the fierce clamor, and expecting, with a sullen croak, its share of the quarry. In the farther corner of this basin, clear as the virgin crystal in its ordinary state, but turbid now and lashed to foam by the wild conflict of the animals, the stag had turned on his pursuers — nor had he turned in vain; for one, a

brindled bloodhound, the boldest of the pack, unseamed from shoulder-blade to brisket by a thrust of the terrible brow-antler, lay underneath his stamping hoofs a lifeless carcass; while others bayed at a distance, reluctant, as it seemed, again to rush upon an enemy who had already left such painful evidences of his strength and va or on their gored and trampled limbs. Nor, though his velvet coat was clogged and blackened with the dust and sweat, and though the big tears — tokens of anguish in its expression well-nigh human — rolled down his hairy cheeks, did he exhibit aught of craven terror at the approach of his inveterate pursuers; but, as the veteran advanced upon him, with the glittering wood-knife bared and ready, leaving the dogs, as if beneath his notice, he dashed with a bold spring against his human persecutor, eye, hoof, and horn in perfect concert of quick movement.

The slightest tremor in the huntsman's nerves, the most trifling slip or stumble, might have well proved fatal; but, although seventy winters had shed their snows upon his head, his muscles had been indurated so by constant exercise in his beloved field-sports, that many a younger arm had failed in rivalling their powerful though unelastic firmness. When the despairing deer made his last effort, eluding by a rapid turn his formidable front, Sir Henry struck a full blow as he passed, completely severing the tendons of the hinder leg. Hamstrung and crippled, the gallant brute plunged headlong forward, and received, the next instant, the keen point in his gullet. One short gurgling bleat, and two or three convulsive struggles of the agile limbs followed. The full eye glazed, and in a moment all the fiery energy, the bounding life, that had so lately animated that beautiful form, were utterly extinct forever. Then came the thundering shouts, and the long cadences of the French horns, their joyous notes multiplied by the ringing echoes, and sent back from every heath-clad knoll or craggy eminence. The merry narrative of harmless accidents ensued, the self-congratulations of the select and lucky few, who, from the start to the death, had kept the hounds in view, the queries for the absent, the praises of some favorite horse or daring rider, the stingless raillery, the honest unfeigned laughter.

"Who hath seen young Arden? What chance hath hindered Edgar?" suddenly inquired one of the younger of the party.

"Edgar not here!" exclaimed his father, for the first time discovering his absence; "Edgar not here! 'Fore George! but he must bide the jest for this!"

"'T is strange, Sir Henry — passing strange, though!" interposed an old gray-headed forester. "None here can beat the master's horsemanship; and that brown mare hath the pace in her, and the bottom too. Pray Heaven he be not hurt."

"I fear he may — I fear he may be hurt," exclaimed another. "He was beside me just before we crossed the northern road. I marked him charge the Hartley burn right gallantly, and noticed the mare's stride — nigh thirty feet, I warrant it."

In a moment or two, the wonder had increased until it might be called anxiety — excitement — the more so, as at intervals the laggards of the chase came straggling in, with mud-stained garb and jaded horses; yet none brought tidings of the absent cavalier. At length, sounding their horns from time to time, they turned their horses' heads toward home, asking for tidings of their missing comrade from every traveller or peasant they encountered. Nothing did they learn, however, till they had reached the park, when an unlucky groom, leading his lame and weary hunter by the rein, informed them that the young master had been accosted, as he crossed the great north road, by a passing stranger—a marvellously sour-looking knave, the servant said, with a cropped pate and puritanic garb; that he had curbed his horse to listen to him, and on the receiving of some packet or despatches, he knew not whether, had ridden slowly homeward in deep converse with the bearer.

"St. George! and with a Puritan!" cried one of the young Outrams, a hair-brained, light-hearted cavalier—"a rascally, starved roundhead!"

"He must be strangely altered then, I trow," muttered the aged huntsman, who perhaps had taught him when a boy to ride so well, "an' he be gone home with a musty

beggar — the hounds running breast high, too, o'er the vale of Bardsey!"

"Tush! tell me not; he is too true an Arden," cried his father, almost angrily, "that he should e'er consort with base and brutal fanatics, Heaven's curse upon them!"

It was true, notwithstanding — the report of the fallen rider — to its most minute particular of circumstance; for as Edgar leaped the fence into the road, and pulled upon his rein to spare his horse's feet on the rough pavement, a strange-looking man, gaunt, grim, and tall, with an affected air of sanctified austerity on his pinched features, wearing his coarse and foxy hair shorn close to the skin, and clipped into small peaks alike unseemly and ridiculous, with a tall steeple-crowned hat, and a sad-colored doublet, threadbare and travel-worn, presenting altogether an appearance as dissimilar as possible to that of a gentleman, called to him in a pert shrill voice —

"Canst tell the distance hence to Woodleigh, master — the residence of Arden, him men call Sir Henry, cumbering their tongues with vain distinctions, titles alike unsavory and profitless?"

"A brief three miles," frankly returned the cavalier. "But you may spare yourself even that short distance, an' you list. There rides Sir Henry — he on the chestnut horse! I will o'ertake and stop him, an' your business may not tarry!"

"Nay, friend," returned the other, "my call is not with the old, vain-minded, carnal cavalier, but with his son—a godly youth, men say — honest and sanctified! yea, one of the elect —"

"A truce to thine impertinence, sir knave!" Edgar replied, in a quick, angry tone; "a truce to thine impertinence, an' thou wouldst not receive its wages; nor deem thy fulsome flattery toward myself shall anywise excuse thy ribald scoffing at my father! Begone, sir; tempt me, an' you be wise, no farther!" and he had already touched his mare with the spur in order to regain his place beside the hounds, which had gained on him some two field's width during the interruption, when the Puritan reined his hackney short across the path, crying out in a voice

somewhat diminished of its self-importance, "Nay! no offense!" he said; "for if thou be'st the man, 'twere worth thy while to tarry. I am the bearer of a letter! yea, of two letters, for the good youth, Edgar Arden. I pray thee to relieve me of the charge."

"Begone, sir! To your duty!" again vociferated Arden, in a tone yet sterner than he had used before. "Begone to Woodleigh and await my leisure. When I return, 't will be, I warrant me, full soon enough to look to these despatches. I know not who should write to me by such a low and scurvy comrade, that I should lose my sport to minister to his convenience!"

"Well, be it as thou wilt," muttered the Puritan; "but, an' John Milton's—worshipful John Milton's letter meet with no better treatment, I had as well wend back again to Huntingdon!"

"Milton! ha!" answered Arden, who had already moved to some considerable distance before he caught the name; "Milton! why saidst not so before, perverse and insolent? Dally with me no farther, thou wert best, but give at once thy missives, and follow me direct to Woodleigh."

Ere he had finished speaking he received the packets—the one a large and cumbrous parcel, wrapped in a skin of thick discolored parchment, and fastened by a triple band of flaxen thread, with a huge seal stamped with armorial bearings, charged on a broad municipal escutcheon—the other a small neatly-folded letter of smooth white vellum, secured by a skein of delicate floss silk and a drop of wax impressed with a superb antique—the stern and rigid features of the elder Cato. The former was addressed, with cramped mercantile penmanship, to "Edgar, son of the worshipful Sir Henry Arden, knight banneret, and baronet of Woodleigh, nigh to Buxton, in the good shire of Derby, with haste and diligence, post haste!" The latter was directed, in a beautiful but bold and manly hand, "To the noble youth Edgar Arden." This was the first he opened, and a pleasing smile played over his fine features as he perused the well-turned periods of his already celebrated friend.

"I much rejoice to hear,"—thus did the letter run—"most excellent and esteemed sir, that you have now accomplished, with no hurt or detriment, your long looked-for return to England; and, what redounds so vastly to your credit, that you have come, weaning your thirsty soul from those delicious draughts of pure Parnassian waters in which you have so bathed of late your fancy, and casting aside your delectation in those Italian cities wherein you have so profited by cultivating high pursuits of literature and conversations of the learned, to turn the complete *vis* and vigor of your intellect toward the miserable strait in which our native land lies struggling,—

'Ut clausus Gyaræ scopulis parvaque Seripho,'

a strait so fearful, that she well-nigh has lost, not only the fruition, present and temporal, of her liberties, both civil and religious, but the very hope of their redemption.

"And yet more earnestly do I rejoice that you are called so suddenly, and with so honorable circumstance, to take your place in that high council of the nation, for which your genius and your talents so excellently do befit you. I would not wish you in so much to ponder on the character and fashions of them that have united in this tribute to your worth, if they should be in aught—although good patriots and true—distasteful to your feelings; as on the mighty services you well may be an instrument to render, and on the duty paramount, which should enforce you so to render them, in that most glorious and free assemblage on which hangs every hope of England. But, with respect to this, without requiring my injunctions, you have an admirable monitor, a very entire and pure guide, in your own sense of right, which to obey is to be virtuous and wise, and in obeying which you shall at once fulfill the wishes of your oppressed and lamentable country, and give the highest pleasure to your well-wisher and friend constantly.

"JOHN MILTON.

"*From my villa, Aldersgate, Oct.* 12, 1641."

The calm deliberation with which the cavalier had opened and applied himself to read the familiar letter of his trusty fellow-traveller, gave way, long ere he had concluded, to manifest and restless eagerness; and if he read it through before he tore asunder the fastenings of the larger packet, it was rather that he hoped within itself to find a clew whereby to solve its mystery, than that he was indifferent to learn what was the nature of the call to which his friend alluded. But when he closed it, still in ignorance of that which it behooved him most to know, his color went and came, and his heart beat quick as he turned hastily to the sole remaining source of information.

The paper that first caught his eye on opening the packet was a fair document, in large clear characters, engrossed on vellum, and purporting to be an invitation from the freeholders of the good town of Huntingdon to Edgar Arden, that he would present himself a candidate to fill the seat, as member for their borough in the most worshipful the Commons House of Parliament, lately made vacant by the untimely death of their regretted and right trusty delegate, Elias Chaloner. The second was a brief, explanatory statement, signed by the mayor and several of the leading burghers of the town, assuring him, that all he had to do in order to secure election was to make known to them his willingness to serve in parliament, as no other candidate was in the field; nor, if there were, could any have the smallest chance of coping with success against a nominee so universally admired and approved by every class of voters. No pledge was asked; no line of conduct indicated, to which it was expected that he should adhere; no reference required or question offered as to his attachment to either of the parties, between which the whole of England was at that time divided.

They were sufficiently assured, the letter stated, of the integrity, the wisdom, and the constancy of him on whom their choice had fallen — so well assured, that they were perfectly content, without condition specified or question asked, to place their interests, their hopes, their fortunes, and, if need were, their lives, at his disposal. In mute

astonishment he read successively these several documents; and still, the more he read, the more his wonder and his doubts increased.

That he, who had been absent from the land of his fathers almost from the day on which he first wrote man—that he, unstamped by any public act or private declaration; uncommitted to any party or opinion, nay, undecided, for aught that the world knew, in his own mind as to which cause he should espouse in the approaching contest, foreseen by him as by all men endowed with ordinary prescience of events — that he should be thus summoned, within two weeks of his arrival in his native country, and that without a pledge, to fill a place the most conspicuous to which a private individual can well aspire — that he should be thus eminently trusted, and by men whose very names were strangers to his ears · whose town he had never even entered save as a passing traveller; whose principles, but from the somewhat formal and affected plainness of their style, together with the unseemly garments and austere demeanor of their messenger, he had no means of so much as conjecturing; and who, so far as he could comprehend, must be still more at a loss to judge of the parts or principles of him, to whom they had so confidently offered the representation of their interests, the proxy of their united voices! All this was indeed sufficiently embarrassing, nay, unaccountable at any time; and the more so at a period when political intrigue and treachery were rife, beyond all precedent, among the men reputed as the leaders in the councils of the nation. That such a call was flattering, and that in a degree not trivial or accustomed, could not be doubted or denied; but while he felt that sweetest, most ennobling of sensations, the conviction that his character was understood and his worth appreciated by his fellow-citizens, mingled with a high consciousness that his eloquence, his learning, and experience might indeed minister not smally to the welfare of his country, Arden was yet perplexed, anxious, and doubtful.

Nor did it seem that he was destined easily or by any effort of his own to extricate himself from this uncertainty; for when, after musing long and vainly on the cir-

cumstances connected with the preparation and forwarding of the letters, he turned for information to the messenger, that worthy, perhaps resenting with the rancor of a petty mind the merited rebuke of Edgar, perhaps himself ignorant of the facts and unwilling to admit his ignorance, wrapped himself up in such a veil of real or pretended dullness as defied every species of cross-examination applied to wring from his fanatic obstinacy the reluctant truth.

He had been sent, he said, an hired messenger, to carry certain missives, not to expound enigmas, nor to illuminate the darkness of those whom it might be, Jehovah had for their sins involved in the dark night of ignorance. He knew not aught of the matter; nor, if he had known, should he have deemed it fitting to reveal that which those worthy persons, his employers, had found it meet to leave uncertain. The burgh of Huntingdon, he answered, when Edgar varied the subject and the manner of his investigation, was a true town and godly; its late member, good Elias Chaloner, a man learned beyond his fellows, not in the vain and carnal lore of the idolatrous and God-defying heathen, but in the pure and sanctifying wisdom of the gospel! Of its politics he knew not anything, nor cared. Some cavaliers there were — debosht rakehelly profligates — such as the Knight of Hinchinbrook, uncle of worthy Master Cromwell, now sitting in the commons house for the right saintly town of Cambridge, and others not a few. But of a truth the citizens, craftsmen, and artisans, ay, and the mayor and council, were pious and God-fearing men, seeking the Lord alway, day and night, in prayer and meditation. For the rest, if it were so that they had summoned Master Arden to be their deputy in parliament, verily theirs was the power to do so — ay, and they knew right well the wherefore! They were not men, he trowed, to leap i' the dark and to repent at leisure. If Master Arden thought it good to suit himself to this promotion, his, as was very fitting, would be the honor and advancement. If not, the men of Huntingdon would be at little trouble to elect as good a statesman if not one abler to represent their voices.

In this unsatisfied and dubious state of mind Edgar, with his uncourtly comrade, arrived at the park gates; and, quickening his pace, rode hastily along the noble avenue of elms to the main entrance, flung his rein to a groom, and consigning his companion to the attentions of the gray-headed steward, passed with a hurried and irregular step to his own chamber; there, in undisturbed and silent solitude, to ponder on his singular position. An hour fled by, as with his head propped on his hands, and his eyes eyes fixed on the characters of which his mind however took no note, he racked his brain with almost hopeless efforts to conjecture who might be the secret movers in this matter. That his friend Milton had ever been an ardent votary of liberty, in its most liberal and extended sense—a dreamer of those bright utopian visions concerning perfect commonwealths and absolute equality of man, which, in whatever age or country, never have been—never can be realized—a modeller of constitutions excellent in contemplation, but untested by experience; or, if tested by the self-styled republics, but, in truth, either perfect aristocracies or absolute democracies, of early Rome or earlier Greece, proved only to be fickle, changeful, and unstable, Arden well knew. Often with delighted ears had he listened, and with a mind that yielded to the enthralling grandeur of those theoretic dreamings, while it perceived their fallacy, to the deep-souled and burning eloquence with which the great poet loved to advocate his wild but splendid projects. He had moreover heard, that subsequently to his return from Italy, the sage enthusiast had devoted himself with stern and self-denying application to the maintenance of the most rigid puritanic forms of Protestant morality and doctrines against the laxer customs of the Church of England, at that time assimilating itself daily more and more, through the bigoted obstinacy of its reckless monarch, and of that most dangerous of all his counsellors, the haughty and half papistical Laud, to the detested ritual and creed of Rome. Nor could he doubt, well as he was informed of the almost inseparable league between Puritanism in religion and the love of freedom in the state, that the already celebrated author of "Reformation in

England," and "the Reason of Church Government," was no less strongly interested in opposition to that extension of prerogative, already stretched to the very verge of absolute and irresponsible autocracy, than his illustrious admirers and associates, Hampden and Pym.

Still he could not easily give credence to the fancy, that Milton only—for to him alone, of all those patriots with whom his spirit sympathized so warmly in their devoted struggles in behalf of England's constitution, was he personally or intimately known—should have possessed the power to procure him that untrammelled offer of a seat which individuals of far greater eminence might have been proud to occupy,

Amid these painful meditations, too, there ran a mingled strain of deeper, because more personal disquietude—an agonizing apprehension, amounting almost to a certainty, that a seat in parliament, entailing on him, as it necessarily must, the highest of all moral obligations—binding him, with fetters strong as his own inborn sense of right, to the upholding of that cause which his mature unbiased judgment should deem right—must set him on the instant in direct unnatural opposition to his father; and yet worse, must sever him from her whose love he surely prized above all mortal blessings.

It was in vain that he attempted to shake off the leaden weight of this dark apprehension; it was to no purpose that hope whispered to his bosom how all might yet be well; it was to no purpose that he strove to reconcile the diverse paths of duty and of pleasure. A dozen times he took his pen in hand to write an answer to the perplexing invitation; and as often threw it from him in utter inability to frame a single sentence. Once, at suggestion of his warmer passions, and yielding to the persuasion of that single grain of selfishness, which must still lurk in every bosom, even of the best and purest, his fingers traced three lines of absolute denial; but, ere the clause was finished, the juster sense returned, and the torn sheet was in an instant shrivelling amid the logs that crackled on the hearthstone. "No, no!" he cried aloud, in the low, husky tones which tell so surely of inward excitement. "No, no—my country—never will I fail thee at thine ut-

most need! What though my heart be broken in the strife—what though I lose all things that make this earth a paradise and not a desert—what though I perish, or, yet worse, live homeless, friendless, fatherless, abandoned, hated by whom I most adore, and cursed by whom I bless—what though I, *I*, one man and for one little life, must bear all anguish that a life can compass,—shall I for this shrink back, knowing that England needs the voice, the hand, the life of every son she has, to save her from destruction—to redeem her living millions—her millions yet unborn, from countless centuries of servitude and sorrow! The cup—the cup is filled! God grant me strength to drain it—ay, to the very dregs!"

And with a calm unfaltering hand he drew a brief but full acceptance of the trust so proffered to his choice, pledging himself to act, so long as he should represent their voices, so, and so only, as his own heart should dictate.

"I would," he wrote, "before investing myself with the great and onerous responsibility you wish to impose upon me—I would that you should clearly know and comprehend my principles and rule of action. All party I disclaim—all preconceived opinion from my soul I disavow! To hold the freedom of our land inviolate—of our religion pure, I do esteem the first of duties. But the freedom which I look to—I do pray you mark me now, so shall there be no blame hereafter—is the freedom of our British Constitution, not the licentious anarchy of democratic innovation; and the religion which I will maintain is the religion of my fathers, the reformed Church of England, equally aloof from the debasing superstitions of the Romish creed, and from the stern fanaticism of Calvinistic, Anabaptist, or Independent sectaries. If, then, knowing these my tenets both of church and state, you make it your election still to go forward in this matter, I shall so labor, with such powers both of mind and body as God in his good wisdom has assigned me, as I may deem the fittest to secure unto ourselves, and unto our posterity forever, the blessings of a government at once liberal and firm, of a religion pure, no less than tolerant and free. If, on the other hand, you doubt in aught

my motives, or disapprove my principles as stated heretofore; if you do look that I should yield at any time, or under any circumstance, my own conviction to the opinion or the prejudice of others, even of yourselves, my own constituents, then make at once a fresh selection, choosing a man more suited to your purposes; accepting in meanwhile my high consideration of the honor you have done me, in thus summoning me, as yet a stranger, to the highest station of your trust."

Scarcely had he concluded his epistle, ere a quick, heavy footstep sounded through the corridor—approached his chamber door, and paused beside it, followed by a short firm tap upon the oaken panel. "Now comes the crisis of my fate," inwardly muttered Arden, as, recognizing the footstep of his father, he hurried to admit him.

"So studious, Edgar?" cried the veteran; "plunged to your very neck in parchments!—The matter must, I trow, be all-important, that should have won you homeward from such music as was ringing in your ears, when you this morning left us in the Vale of Bardsey! 'Fore George, but he ran gallantly and straight, poor dapple! —turned him to bay in the Witch hollow beneath Leader hill—gored brindled Mortimer to the death ere I came up with him, and hurt some six or eight of the others. What, the plague, called you home? What clouds your face even now so darkly? Speak, Edgar, hast ill tidings?"

"Not ill, sir, not *ill* tidings, but of weighty import," answered Arden, as his father threw himself upon a massive settle in the chimney corner; "and such as have urged on me much grave thought ere I might answer them!" and, as he spoke, he tendered to his hand the invitation from the burgh of Huntingdon. "Here, if my visage be o'ercast, here shall you find the cause; and this, when you shall have perused the first, contains my answer."

With deep anxiety did the eye of Edgar dwell upon the keen, intelligent features of the aged man, fitfully lighted up by the uncertain gleams from the piled hearth —for evening had crept on them unperceived, and the sky was growing dark apace—as he read the letters by the firelight. Changes there were indeed upon the broad

unwrinkled forehead, chasing each other over it in quick succession. Now a deep frown corded the muscles of the brow, but more perhaps from the effects of thought than from disgust or anger; anon it was relaxed, and a more bland expression played around the mouth, and the full open eye shone cheerfully. Again the glance was clouded, and the lip curled in scorn, till every hair of his mustache worked as it were instinct with life.

"The roundhead scurvy villains!" he exclaimed at length, striking the extended parchment forcibly with the forefinger of his right hand; "the base mechanical burghers!—I marvel they should dare pollute a gentleman's ear with their accursed puritanic cant. You have refused them, Edgar—indignantly hurled back their most insulting proffer in their teeth! Is it not so?—now, on your life, say ay!"

"I see it not in this light, sir," Edgar replied, respectfully but firmly; "I see it not at all in this light; nor is there aught, to my poor comprehension, either of cant or insult in this invitation."

"Doubtless you have accepted it! this flattering invitation!" interrupted the old man, with an expression of the most bitter irony; "doubtless you have!"

"I *have* accepted it," calmly returned his son; "I have indeed accepted it, nor can I possibly conceive—"

"You have *not*, Edgar Arden," his father almost shouted, as he sprang to his feet, spurning the footstool from beneath them to the farther corner of the room; "you have not *dared* to do so! You! you! an Arden—heir to some twenty generations of high-minded, noble, loyal cavaliers—*you* blend yourself with the foul puddle blood of craftsmen and pinched beggarly mechanics—you band yourself with hypocrites and traitors against your church, your country, and your king!—No, no!—it can *not* be!"

"Indeed! indeed! it could not," replied Edgar, in tones almost femininely soothing; "indeed it could not be, that I should ever mix myself with aught degenerate or base, much less with aught unprincipled or traitorous. But, of a truth, my father, I apprehend not anything—though straining to the utmost of my understanding—I

apprehend not anything here written to imply aught that can by any means be tortured into treason or fanaticism. Nay, for my part, I find not aught that would restrain me, if I should be so minded, from degrading loyalty, even while acting as the member for this very borough, into most prostrate oriental slavishness; from bartering our reformed religion for Romish superstition! A seat is proffered to me freely, without condition, pledge, or hint of any interference. Nay! the constituents aver that they refer themselves in all things to my judgment; submit themselves to absolute dictation of my individual will. Now, sir, it seems to me—I pray you so far pardon me as to permit me to speak to the end—it seems to me, if—as I see no cause to deem them such—these men of Huntingdon be fanatics and traitors, there cannot be a better mode of frustrating their ill intentions, than that I, who most assuredly am neither, should accept their offer, and represent their bigoted and treasonable voices by a calm, tolerant, and patriotic vote."

Sir Henry's passions had displayed their progress on his features during his son's rejoinder even more strongly and with more definite changes than before. At the first, every line and feature was inflamed almost to bursting with fierce and fiery indignation, varying as Edgar proceeded to that air of obstinate unwilling coolness with which a man resigns himself to some infliction which he may not avoid. Then, as the truth of what was said impressed itself by slow degrees upon his senses, he listened with attention approaching somewhat to respect, till, when the last sentence fell upon his ear, and he fancied that the full policy of his son was there disclosed to him, the mighty satisfaction flashed from his whole face as he exclaimed—

"Excellent! I was dull indeed! excellent! Edgar; and so hoist the knave engineers, e'en with their own petard! 'Fore George, but you surpass, not your old father's talents only—that you did ever—but his uttermost wishes! And so, when the fool Puritans would have you rob the church and manacle the king, vote like a loyal cavalier!—Now out on me for an old superannuated dolt that would not hear or comprehend!"

"Nay, sir; but even now," said Edgar, not a little astonished by this ebullition of mistaken pleasure—"even now you do misapprehend me somewhat. I have accepted this same seat in the commons, giving the men of Huntingdon to know that I will hold myself responsible to no authority save that of my own conscience. Party, or place, I hold not to, nor covet. In all high honor and in all accordance with my own sense of what is just and right, will I vote ever!—If these men should dare propose to me, or hint that I should swerve one hair breadth from the course of truth and honor, then would I surely disobey them, frustrate them, and spurn them. But, if they should prove honest, surely I will compromise no tittle of their interests or their opinions; and so far am I from suspecting aught of this, that I do well believe that my constituents will prove right honest men and true, otherwise, under favor be it spoken, I deem it most unlikely they should have fixed their choice on me, a man perhaps not altogether void of some repute of honor, and—if unknown myself—at least a scion of a family that has not ever stooped to fraud or to disgrace!"

"Enough said! Edgar; enough said! I was a fool to doubt you;" and the old man grasped his hand with warm affection as he answered, while a tear slid down his withered cheek; "I was a fool to doubt you—for you were ever true and noble, as I was ever over-choleric and rash. Some things, too, in good sooth there are, that might be well amended. This ship-money I like not altogether, nor these violent forced subsidies; yet less like I the sordid Puritanic knaves, who do oppose them, not that they know or understand the evil of the measures which they rail at, but that they would embarrass and annoy, and, if their means were mated to their will, would doubtless strive to overthrow the government from which these measures emanate; not that they love their country, but that they hate their king. Because, being base themselves, they loathe the very name of what is high, or generous or noble—because, having naught to lose even in England's ruin, they may gain all in the midst of uproar and confusion.

"But enough said!—you shall receive their offer, since so

you will it, although I hold a promise of a borough from my Lord of Middleton awaiting your acceptance, for which, I speak it in all candor, I would far rather have you member than for this beggarly psalm-singing body corporate of Huntingdon. But enough said!—Bear with me, Edgar, for I am old, and choleric withal, and hasty! And now to supper! For John, cook, will be foaming if his goose pie be burnt, or his beef boiled to rags—as with o'erflowing eyes he swore to me they were last night, and all through fault of mine!"

CHAPTER VI.

KINGCRAFT AND CONSTITUTION.

> The power of armies is a visible thing,
> Formal and circumscribed in time and place;
> But who the limits of that power shall trace
> Which a brave people into light can bring
> Or hide at will,—for Freedom combating
> By just revenge inflamed?
>
> WORDSWORTH.—*Sonnets to Liberty.*

It is a fact, which cannot have escaped the notice of the observant student of history, past and present, that, while men and things, the very greatest, are acting or acted before the eyes of the living generation, unless they be of magnitude so stupendous, and of significance so unmistakable, as to compel conviction, they pass uncomprehended, if not entirely unremarked, by the multitude.

Only, after one age has given place to its successor, is the full import of its events perceived by the public, the true character of its heroes weighed in the balance and admitted of standard, or found wanting.

Still more constantly is this the case, when vast events, such as impress their stamp on the condition and characters of nations, and make their eras, epochs, are not actually passing, but imminent and instantly to be expected.

The disturbance is seen, the storm is foreseen by every one; but it is the one man of the thousand, only, who perceives that the tumult of the elements is not, and that the tempest will not be, such as those which were yesterday, and may be on every to-morrow, to pass over and leave the face of nature constant and unaltered.

The exciters of great popular uprisings and first movers of great national mutations, almost as often as their victims, are startled and astounded at finding what they thought reform, resistance to oppression, revolution.

So it has ever been, must ever be; and, if it be true, that, to the very instruments and actors,

> "Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream,"

it is certain that, to the masses of mankind, such intervals are wholly unappreciated, if not unappreciable.

While riot is blazing into rebellion, and rebellion growing into revolution, nay! while civil armies are set in bloody opposition, and the vengeful ax is lopping heads in the market-place, faster than the sword on the battle-field, men will pursue their wonted avocations; inquire, like the Athenians, when Philip rode victorious over Chæronea, "what there is new" on 'change; seek pleasure in the theatres; eat, drink, and be merry; marry and give in marriage; as did the dwellers of Pompeii, while Vesuvius was already kindling his subterraneous furnaces for their destruction.

And so it was in England, in the autumn of 1641; the sister kingdom of Ireland was in the very agony of the most hideous of all wars, a religious, civil war; England herself was in the throes, from which nothing but internecine strife and years of blood could issue; yet the minds of men, even of those in the vortex of politics, intent on what was before them, saw little—and the others, nothing,—of what a few short months should bring forth.

The golden days of autumn had already fled; the last slow wain had dragged its freight to the piled threshing-floor; the last flower had shed its petals scentless and colorless upon the frosted grass. The leaves, that had for

many weeks clothed grove and forest in a rich garb of many-colored splendor, now detached themselves one by one from the sere branches, and fell whirling slowly in the heavy atmosphere, like hopes blighted before accomplishment, to the dank steamy earth; the glimpses of the sun were rarer and more pallid than their wont, and often in the depth of night the mighty winds went forth, wailing as if in sorrow over the faded glories of the year.

Nor were the signs of the times less gloomy than the tokens of the season. All England was in confusion and dismay, and both these hourly increasing, till the one half of the people was well nigh maddened by its fears, the other by the excitement of its own fierce and stormy passions. To-day a rumor was abroad of mighty armaments levied beyond the sea; and even now preparing to pollute with foreign weapons the free soil of England, and to erect the power of her monarch, already stretched beyond all limits of constitutional sway, into absolute and self-controlling tyranny. On the next, a tale was rife that Pym, the champion of the people's cause and king of their affections, had been assailed, perhaps even murdered, by the hired emissaries of a sovereign stern and cold by nature, and rendered merciless and cruel by the extremity of terror.

Then came the one great accusation, swallowing up in its atrocity all lesser charges, all inferior crimes, as the sunshine drinks up and blots from heaven the fainter lustre of the stars; the one great accusation, at that time generally credited by men of every class except perhaps a few of the most confiding and most generous cavaliers—and since those days confirmed almost beyond the possibility of doubt—that the Irish rebellion, with all its horrible features of midnight massacre and mid-day conflagration, was the premeditated, coolly calculated work of Charles and Henrietta. The one great accusation, which penetrating every breast, in every rank of persons, with mingled sentiments of pity, horror, hatred, and disgust, imbittered still more against him the foes of the misguided sovereign, and alienated from his side many of those devoted and enthusiastic spirits, who never would have swerved from their allegiance, so long as they had sense or being,

had he but shown himself in the most trivial circumstances constant, not to his faithful servants, but to his own true interests, or even to himself.

In the commons house the minds of men were even more unsettled than in the world at large. Parties ran daily higher, and with a greater share of virulence and private animosity than at any previous period; and, indeed, it seemed that the king himself was laboring as earnestly to the advantage of his enemies, the Puritans, as they themselves could wish. At the first meeting of the parliament, a committee had been appointed "to draw up a general remonstrance of the state of the kingdom, and the particular grievances it had sustained." This committee, after its first nomination, had, however, scarcely ever met, and was almost forgotten. Now, however, during the causeless and protracted absence of the ill-fated monarch in the sister kingdom of Scotland, irritated by his apathy with regard to bleeding Ireland, appreciating fully his dishonest motives in lingering at a distance from his parliament, and goaded almost to madness by his attempt to seize or to assassinate, as many did in truth believe, Argyle and Hamilton, the party came to the resolve of reproducing that momentous question. In accordance with their views, upon Strode's motion, it was carried, that "the committee of remonstrance be revived, and ordered without more delay to meet;" and time and place incontinently were appointed.

Within a few days of this measure, a bill of far more questionable character, not to be justified, and palliated only—if it might any way be palliated—by the unwonted and most unbecoming violence of the spiritual lords, who lent themselves in every instance willing instruments to aid the usurpation of the sovereign, and scrupled not to violate the spirit and the letter of the laws against the Romish church, was introduced, ordered by a majority of voices to be read, and, without any opposition worthy of remark, transmitted to the lords, for disabling the bishops from the exercise of voting in the upper house, or of any temporal office throughout the kingdom.

Just at this critical and anxious juncture, with his accustomed rashness and inveterate obstinacy, Charles

deemed it fitting to collate five preachers of undoubted eminence and learning, but better known for principles of state the most obnoxious than even for their talents, to as many sees vacant by death or by translation, in absolute defiance, as it seemed, of the desires of the popular branch of legislation, and contrary to the advice of his most trustworthy and valuable counsellors. In the midst of the tumults — for to an extent, which scarcely can be designated by a less forcible word, was the violent struggle carried between the upper and the lower houses — consequent upon this doubtful measure, tidings arrived in London, that on a day appointed, having arranged all matters in that kingdom to the general satisfaction, his majesty intended to depart from Scotland on his homeward progress; and straightway the committee offered the report of their proceedings, together with a draught of the remonstrance, to the house. The commons instantly, although divided much in sentiment, and, as many thought, in general opposed to this decisive stroke, proceed to discuss it with a degree of bitterness and fury perhaps unprecedented except in the debates upon the case of Strafford.

In the meanwhile an answer had been returned to Arden by his constituents of Huntingdon, agreeing fully to the terms he had proposed whereon to serve them in the commons as their representative and member; and urging him, so soon as it might be consistent with his leisure, to betake himself to London, there to assume his seat. All preparations had been made for his departure; chambers were secured for him in Westminster; his retinue and horses had been sent before him; nay, even a day was fixed whereon again to leave, after so brief enjoyment of its serene and tranquil pleasures, his paternal home. He felt not, it is true, that terrible sensation of passionate and overwhelming sorrow which drowns the hearts of the young at their first setting forth into the wide and cheerless world, from the dear roof that saw their birth; much less that sullen and collected bitterness with which the exile gazes, ere he turn from them forever, upon the scenes never before so beautiful or so beloved. But he did feel a heavy and continual gloom

clouding, he scarce knew wherefore, all his anticipations of the future — an ominous and all-engrossing sense of coming evil—a prophetic fear, that it would never be his again to cast away the burden of his sorrows, and be, as it were, once again a child in spirit, beside that old domestic hearth—a fear not justified, perhaps, by any clear perception, nor founded on any evidence of judgment; but still oppressing his mind, no less than the influence of a coming thunder-storm is often seen to agitate the lower grades of animal creation, when not a speck of cloud is visible as yet above the clear horizon.

So far indeed as regarded any real or well founded apprehensions, Arden had every following day less cause to dread a rupture with his father in consequence of any difference in politics; for so completely had the old man taken up the notion that his son intended to apply his nomination by the Puritanic party to the advancement of the royal interests, that Edgar fruitlessly endeavored to apprise him of the error, and to convince him of his own sincerity and singleness of purpose.

"Right! right! boy," he would cry; "never betray your counsel!—and in good sooth you have a perilous part to play, and a politic — best vote a few times with the canting knaves—so better to throw dust i' their eyes, that they discover not your game ere it be fit time to disclose it, husbanding so your powers as to aid our gracious master in his real straits, an' it should come — which God avert—to such an issue!"

For a time, indeed — so utterly abhorrent was the smallest shadow of deception to his ingenuous mind and rigid sense of honor—he strenuously and sincerely strove to make Sir Henry comprehend his principles; his entire devotion to the laws and constitution of his country, as established by the precedent of ages, not as interpreted by the corrupt and pensioned lawyers of the court; his firm attachment to the privilege of parliament, as opposed to the prerogative of the crown; and, above all, his absolute disgust at the late proceedings taken by the king in relation to the claim of ship-money especially, and to the infringement of the anti-Catholic statutes. But finding all endeavors vain to overturn his preconceived opin-

ion, he abandoned altogether the ungracious task, in an uncertain state of mind, bordering at one moment on hope, at another on its opposite extreme, despair. Now, he would argue with himself, when brighter thoughts prevailed, that, as his father's violence of loyalty was already so greatly modified as to permit him to admit the participation of corrupt men, and the existence of evil measures, in the councils of his kingly idol, his own course might so far tally with his views, or, at the worst, might differ from them only in so small particulars, as to call forth no very strenuous or lasting reprobation. Again, when giving way to gloomier though perhaps more probable imaginations, he could, almost, foresee that the obstinate determination of the sovereign to dispense with parliaments, to recognize the laws of the land but so far as they should further his own imperious wishes, to rule, in short, as an absolute and arbitrary monarch, and the noble stand assumed by the delegates of the people in defense of the people's rights, would by no means ever be composed or reconciled except by arbitration of the sword. Nor could he so far deceive himself, as to doubt, that in such a case, as certainly as he should be himself found warring in the ranks of freedom, so sure would Sir Henry arm to buckler the time-hallowed names of church and king, although the former should be almost Romish, and the latter wholly despotic. Thus was the mind of Edgar balanced during the interval which elapsed between his first acceptance of the proffered honor and his departure for the metropolis. Its moods were as various as the changes of an April day, now bright with sunshiny and azure skies, now blackened with the scudding wrack, and howling with the stormy gusts.

The days, however, wore onward. The chase in the morning, with its heart-stirring sounds and high associations, or the stroll through the highly-cultivated grounds about the homestead, or the familiar visit to the independent yeoman or the sturdy peasantry, consumed the earlier hours; and, when the mid-day meal was ended, the ramble in the beautiful broad park, beneath the autumnal trees, with his sweet cousin, beguiled the hours

til twilight, when the lamps would all be lighted, and the guests assembled in the lordly hall, or the smaller circle gathered about the parlor fire, to cheat the evening with lay and legend, or with sprightly converse, more pleasantly than with loud minstrelsy and the gay dance.

The days, however, wore onward; and although none else perceived the constant cloud that dwelt on Edgar's brow, Sibyl marked and understood it; and, as if in sympathy, her own transparent skin showed less and less the healthful hues of her elastic blood, and her deep eye was always dimmer than its wont, and often tearful, as it would dwell unnoticed on the overshadowed features of her lover, now constantly absorbed, as he had rarely been of yore, in fits of meditation, abstracting him almost entirely from the business or the pleasure of the moment. After the morning following his return to Woodleigh, although on other topics there had been no reserve, however trivial, no hesitancy or concealment of action, thought, or motive, neither had again alluded to the subject of their interrupted conversation — he shunning it, not merely because he could have nothing agreeable, but because he had nothing definite which to communicate, and therefore was unwilling, needlessly perhaps, to cloud her prospects with certainly a distant, and not improbably a causeless terror, and she not pressing it, because, relying with a pure and holy confidence upon her promised husband, and seeing, that, be his secret sorrow what it might, he felt it not his duty at that time to impart it to her ear, she would have scorned herself could she have entertained the thought but for a moment of obtaining that from his fondness, which his judgment would not warrant his bestowing.

It was not long, however, before Sibyl had another and a surer reason for her silence; for, with that wondrous shrewdness which a woman's heart possesses in divining and discovering anything that may affect it in its own particular province, she felt herself ere long to be the mistress of the causes of his hidden grief. She saw the struggle in his heart between his love for her and for his father, and his devotion to his country. She knew that in the heart of such a man the struggle could last but

for a little while ere it must be decided; she suffered no diminution of her self-respect, no fretting of her vanity, as she acknowledged that her own claims to his affection must surely yield to the overruling *amor patriæ;* and, while she sorrowed with the deep sincerity of a true and loving heart over the election which, she was assured, he had already made, she yet thought she hardly could desire that he had decided otherwise. Even yet there was another cause—a lingering hope, that she might yet have been in error, that she might falsely have interpreted the outward workings of his mind — a fear of banishing that lingering hope, by questioning him, concerning that which she most yearned to know—a fear of learning that, which even now almost knowing true, she would have given worlds to know unreal.

The days wore onward, and the last morning broke, and the last sun arose, which was to shine on Edgar a dweller in his father's house. It was a clear, bright, cheerful morning. A slight touch of frost on the preceding evening had imparted just enough of coldness to the atmosphere to render it more pure and bracing, but the sun shone warmly out, and the dew sparkled laughingly upon the shrubs and grass, and the rooks clove the liquid firmament with their exulting wings at an immeasurable pitch. All nature seemed to rejoice with a more healthful and elastic joy than in the fullest flush of summer. It was, in short, just such a morning as would make the careless and unburdened heart sit lighter on its throne, as would impel the mounted traveller to give his horse the spur, and let his spirits loose by a free and fearless gallop — as would swell the pedestrian's chest, and plant his stride more firmly on the sod, and perchance unclose his lips with something of a song. But it was such a one withal as would cause any one departing from some loved and lovely scene, to feel the necessity of a stronger effort to tear himself away than he would have been called on to exert had the skies been lowering, and the day in nearer unison with his own sad sensations. Accordingly, the tone of Edgar's feelings was depressed beyond its wont, even as the aspect of all visible things was fairer than the promise of the season; his face was care-

worn, and at times it scarcely would have been too strong a term to call it haggard; his gait was various and irregular, hasty at times and hurried, and at times unusually slow; his eye was often fixed on vacancy, and those who addressed him were compelled often to speak their wishes more than once ere they appeared to reach his understanding.

The earlier hours were consumed in preparations till high noon came round, and he sat down to the last meal he was for many a month to taste in fellowship with those who sat beside him, while the unwelcome thought would still intrude itself, that it might be verily the last. In silence then, if not in sorrow, dinner went by, until the board was cleared of all save cup and flagon, and the old servitors withdrew, and Sibyl left the table, — to attend, perchance, to her household duties, or, more probably, to give in private vent to the gushing feelings which in public she was compelled to smother—and sire and son were left without companions. For a while the old man spoke not, resting his head upon his hand as if in anxious thought; and, although once or twice he raised it and made as if about to speak, he yet seemed at a loss for words. At length, as if with something of an effort, he aroused himself, filled up his goblet from the stoop of Bordeau wine before him, and, pushing it toward his son, motioned that he should follow the example, gazed for a moment wistfully upon the clouded features that met his eye, and with a nod and smile that vainly struggled to be lightsome, emptied his winecup.

"Come, Edgar, come!" he said, "this gloom will never do! Cheer up, my boy, cheer up! You now take on more sadly methinks than when you left us for your three years term of service in the Low Countries; but I can see how sits the wind; old though I be, and past these toys this many a winter's day. I mind when I was a young cavalier, and not — although I say it who should not—the most unlikely in the court of good Queen Bess, we ne'er shall look upon her like again — I mind how I was wont to droop at parting from your mother, my sweet Alice — Sibyl, though passing fair, is nothing for beauty to what she was—well—too well! do I mind it."

Arden, who had shaken off his air of abstraction for a moment as his father drank to him, was again relapsing into the same listless mood on perceiving that his words were rather unconnected musings than such as called for answer or remark; but when the name of Sibyl caught his ear, his eye lightened, and the color rushed to his brow, as he perceived that his inmost thoughts were about to be subjected to the keen probe of mental surgery.

"Ay! ay! I can see plain enough how sits the wind," continued Sir Henry, without pausing for a reply; "though why you should be so much cast down, I may not comprehend so readily. Your cousin Sibyl, I do know right well, has long possessed your love, and as long, too, returned it. That I have in all things approved of this, I need not tell you now, seeing that you must well conceive, that knowing this and not prohibiting was to all needful ends consenting. That you should be cast down at leaving so sweet a girl as Sibyl, is — I gainsay it not — right natural; nathless I cannot but imagine that you apprehend some greater evil than a mere temporary separation. Now, boy, to the point. You would espouse your cousin Sibyl; she says not nay; and if my interference be a cause of dread to you, I say but this, that you have cruelly misjudged your father's heart. My blessing on you both. I know no sweeter balm for all the manifold griefs of age, than to make, and to see, the youthful happy. So set your soul at ease, my own brave boy, you shall wed Sibyl when you will; and the more quickly, the more gladly, and more surely shall I witness it. You start for Westminster to-night; and I have thought often now of late on passing this next Christmas-tide in London. Sibyl, poor child, has seen nothing of court gayety nor of the world as yet, and this is but a lonesome place in winter, the more so now that half the gentles of the land will, as it seems too likely, be detained till spring in the city by these protracted sittings of the Houses, which men speak of. I have determined now to give you a commission. Choose me a fitting mansion, whether to rent or purchase I care not a maravedi; in the Strand, if you may, if not in Westminster or Charing. See it

right nobly furnished, and write me when 't is done. I will bring Sibyl thither straightway, and, sith you may not spend these holidays with us, why we will keep them up with you, I warrant me. And now away to Sibyl; say to her all that I have said to you, and what beside seems fitting to your melancholy mood. You need not me, I trow, to woo her. Fix, if you may prevail on her, your bridal day at once, whene'er you list between Christmastide and Easter. Be happy, Edgar, be happy, and let me see you so—such is my only wish this side eternity,—before I go to my long home."

"My good, my generous, my gracious father!" cried Arden, affected to the point of weeping, as he threw himself upon the old man's neck.

"Tush! tush, boy; none of this!" exclaimed the veteran, hemming away the husky weakness from his throat; "none of this, but away with you to Sibyl; she is more fitting object for these raptures than an old weather-beaten trunk like me. Away with you; but hark you, here is the ring that plighted my departed angel. Let me behold it on *her* hand, whom I have loved the best—nay, I might say, the only one — of women, since my own Alice left me, to drag out my pilgrimage alone, without one hope to cheer me save that of meeting her once more, when it shall be, O Lord, thy merciful and blessed will."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SETTING OF A MIGHTY HOPE.

> Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
> And gathering tears and tremblings of distress,
> And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
> Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
> And there were sudden partings, such as press
> The life out of young hearts, and choking sighs
> Which ne'er might be repeated—
>
> BYRON.—*Childe Harold.*

It would have been of no avail, so bent was the old knight on his benevolent design, even had Edgar been so minded, to strive to alter or oppose his projects. They were not such, however, as to leave a possible desire to his son, which would not be, by their accomplishment, at once achieved. He had no words to answer, but the hot blood rushed tumultuously through his veins, and his strong frame quivered visibly with the excitement of his spirits, as he hurried from the hall to seek his beautiful betrothed. "Once mine, and all beside is nothing! once mine, there will be no more struggle! Duty and pleasure will go hand in hand! Once wedded, and no difference of opinion then may put those asunder whom God has joined together!"

Such were the thoughts that thronged with irresistible impetuosity, and with the speed of light, upon his busy brain; but he had not made six steps beyond the threshold before reflection changed the prospect. "Would it be noble, honorable, upright"—thus did he commune with himself; "would it be worthy of an Arden, the supporter of an unblotted fame of generations, nay, rather, would it not be sordid, base, dishonest, and degrading to the lowliest gentleman, to win a credulous, confiding woman by a fraud, by an implied, if not a spoken lie? To let her wed, believing him she wedded a supporter of the cause she deemed most holy, a soldier armed for the warfare which alone to her seemed just and sacred, to let her wed in haste, and then find out at leisure that she had been deceived by him she had just sworn to *honor?*

"Not so!" he cried aloud, in passionate self-soliloquy. "It shall not be, by heaven! She shall know all, all, everything! Knowing, she shall accept my hand, or knowing, cast me off, but not, at least, despise me!" And, as his mind arrived at its mature though swift conclusion, he reached the door of Sibyl's oriel parlor; with a hesitating hand he struck the panel, and so slight was the sound that it conveyed no tidings to the inmate, at least it was unanswered. Again he knocked, and louder than before; he listened, and still all was silence. Supposing her he sought to have gone forth, he had already turned away to follow her, when a faint noise, as of a person breathing heavily, or perhaps gently weeping, attracted his attention; he knocked a third time, and then, though still unbidden, entered. She was within, she was alone! in the prostration, in the absolute abandonment of feminine and hopeless grief!

Her face was buried in her hands, as she lay stretched at length on the broad pillowed settle which encircled the bay window. Her light brown hair, which had broken loose from the confinement of her silken headgear, flowed in redundant waves over the voluptuous outline of her shoulders, trailing down even to the ground. Her features were, of course, concealed; but the large pearly tears, forcing their way one by one between her fingers, had already left a visible trace of moisture on the damask cushions, while the convulsive starts that agitated her entire frame told even more the depth and anguish of her sorrow than all her weeping.

"Sibyl," he whispered, stealing with noiseless steps over the three-piled Persian carpet till he was close beside her; "my own, own Sibyl!" There was a deep fond pathos in his musical accents which no description could express; a liquid, melancholy tenderness, that sank directly to the heart; "My own, own Sibyl." And with the most respectful delicacy he lifted her from her recumbent attitude; "and weeping too for me! but weep no longer, dearest one, I come, I come. Oh grant it, God, that it may be so, to wipe those tears away, to make you mine forever!"

She gazed upon him for a second's space, wildly, dis-

trustfully; then, as she perceived his earnest air, and marked the hope that kindled in his smile, then brighter thoughts prevailed; and, with the sudden, strange revulsion, abandoning herself to the full tide of her warm, passionate feelings, she sank half fainting on the bosom of her lover.

"Oh grant it, Father of all mercies, grant it, that this too mighty treasure shall indeed be mine!" he murmured fervently, as he supported her, and with considerate expressions of calm fondness recalled her gradually to her self-possession, suppressing every sentiment that might embarrass her returning consciousness, that might in any wise offend or agitate her girlish sensibilities; holding her hand in his the while, but with a quiet, unimpassioned pressure, liker to the expression of a kind brother's love than to the rapturous devotion of a youthful suitor; soothing her with the gentlest tones of his familiar voice, till she was at the least sufficiently composed to listen to his self-restrained and self-accusing pleadings.

"Sibyl," he said at length, as her deep-drawn sighs subsided, and her tears ceased to flow in such unnatural profusion; "Sibyl, dear cousin; soon, soon, I trust, to be addressed by a far dearer title, I have much, much that I would say to you before I go from hence, never unless at your permission to return! much from my father, for myself yet more! Dry your tears, dearest, dry them, I beseech you; it is agony to me to look on them! dry them, and listen to me, that we may, if it be Heaven's pleasure, be happy as the happiest of earth's inhabitants."

"Say on," she difficultly faltered forth the words, "say on, dear Edgar; with my whole soul I do attend you."

"Not here," he answered, "not here, sweet one and not yet! But do your mantle on, and walk forth with me for a little space. You are too greatly agitated yet, calmly to hear, and freely to decide on that, which for your own happiness, and for my life's sake, you must consider warily and well! The pleasant sunshine, the fresh grateful air, and, above all, the peaceful and quiescent scenery, will tranquillize your mind. Moreover, I would not that this sun should set unwitnessed by us twain to

gether. You will go forth, then, dearest; will you not, Sibyl?"

A smile, exquisitely sweet, glancing from out her tears, was her sole token of assent, as she disengaged herself half blushingly from his supporting arms, and, gathering her dishevelled tresses, folded them simply, but in the most perfect taste, around her classically moulded temples.

"Wait for me in the vestibule," she said; "I will be there ere you shall have the time to miss me;" and vanished from the room, leaving a stronger hope in Arden's breast than he had entertained for many a day. He was assured in his own mind, beyond the possibility of doubt, that she had marked the secret conflict of his soul, that she had penetrated his sole mystery, and was aware already of his apprehensions, as to the part which it might ere long be his duty to sustain, whether it should lie in the grave and subtle forum, or in the lamentable field of civil strife; and he now listened to the flattering voice within, which whispered that it might well be, a maiden so affectionate, so warm, and, above all, so deeply and devotedly attached, would overlook the difference in their political creeds, as counterbalanced, rendered nugatory, and a thing of no account, by their entire harmony of soul on every other subject.

It might well be, that one so strong herself in principles of honor and integrity, would find more to admire in the inflexible and stern uprightness which will not sacrifice one particle of conscience, one straw's weight of that which it considers duty, before the shrine of its most intimate and near affections, than to rebuke or reprobate in the opinions or the principles on which that duty hinges.

But he had not long time to waste in thought or speculation; for, as he reached the entrance of the hall, the form he loved so well to look upon came gliding down the stair-case, wrapped in her walking-robe of dark velvet, furred at the cape and cuffs with the most costly minever; and wearing on her head a cap of ermine, its silken crown and lining protruding from above the border of deep fur, and hanging gracefully down, with a white ostrich-feather drooping over it, so as to flush one delicate cheek more warmly than its sister with a teint borrowed from its own

bright crimson. With a passionate and fitful light, far different from the calmness of their wonted radiance, the eyes of Edgar dwelt upon the finely-modelled person, and the features, not the less exquisitely fair that they now wore a melancholy, downcast aspect, of her, on whose acceptance or denial of his present suit his all of hope was fearfully suspended.

So long, indeed, and evident was that fixed gaze of admiration, and so much was she moved by its expression, that the bashful blood rushed like a torrent to brow, cheek, and neck, with blushes scarcely natural, so vivid was their hectic color. Perceiving instantly the cause of her confusion, with an air of deep humility he lowered his offending eyes, and, as he took her hand to lead her forth, "Pardon," he whispered, in low, reverential tones, "pardon me, gentle cousin, my most unwitting and involuntary fault! — if fault it be," he added, with a voice that faltered, and then abruptly paused, as if he were unable to complete the sentence. A quiet pressure of the fingers that yet lingered in his tender grasp, replied at once, and reassured him; and in the silence caused by feelings or by thoughts too powerful for utterance — how widely different from that of apathy or dullness! — they for the last time wandered forth into the pleasant solitudes of the broad sylvan chase.

Throughout the greater part of its extent, this ornamented tract, although diversified enough by change of dale and upland to redeem its beauties from the charge of tameness or monotony, was rather of a level than a broken character; its charms were chiefly of that tranquil and composing cast which is found rather in expanses of deep meadow-land, carpeted by a sward so fresh and so luxuriant as to lose little of its verdure even in the dead months of winter — in the massive foliage of the scattered clumps, or more continuous groves of stately timber-trees — and in the sheets of limpid but unrippled water, than in the features of a scenery, which, if more romantic, is far less alluring, if more enchanting to the first astonished glance, bears not so well the test of daily and familiar observation. Toward its northern and northwestern boundaries, however, the ground was swelling and uneven.

The hills heaved up more boldly from the valleys, which were in places so abrupt and narrow as almost to deserve the name of glens, or dingles, and often wore a coronet of gray and rifted sandstone above the purple heather, that clothed their flanks with a dark russet mantle wheresoever the soil was too poor or too shallow to support the taller growth of hazel, birch, and mountain ash, which clustered round their bases, or straggled up their sides where any casual streamlet had worn a channel to protect them from the western gales, and afforded by its waters a grateful although scanty nutriment to their dwarfed and thirsty roots.

Imbosomed in these rugged eminences, at a short mile's distance from the manor, there lay a little tarn or mountain lake, scarce larger than an artificial pool, but so deep that its glassy waters shone black as polished jet even beneath the azure skies of June. Narrow, however, as it was, it yet could boast its islets, two, fringed from the water's edge with tangled underwood, above which waved some three or four tall trees; the third, a bold and barren rock, whereon some feudal ancestor had perched his solitary fastness, dismantled now and roofless. On every side but one the hills sank steeply down to the lake's brink, leaving no space for the adventurous foot of man, feathered with coppice springing from every rift or crevice of their rocky sides; but on that one a turfy glade sloped gently to the marge, where it was bordered by a stripe of silver sand, which formed a bright and sunny frame to the dark mirror it enclosed. Just where the turf and sand united, a single and gigantic oak, known as the "Friar's tree" for miles around, reared its short massive trunk, garnished with limbs as tortuous and forked as the antlers of the wild herds that loved to rub their budding horns against it in the early springtide; but supporting, even in the flush of summer, only a sparse and scanty garland of green leaves, which rustled now, all sere and yellow, in the melancholy breath of autumn.

Immediately beneath the shadow of this forest patriarch, and partly overlapped by the encroachment of its twisted roots, lay a huge block of deep-red freestone, bearing the marks of rude and half-obliterated sculptures, in which

some village antiquarian had traced or fancied a resemblance to a cowled and sandalled figure, whence the prevailing appellation of the tree; which, ancient as that relic evidently seemed, had probably been in its prime already when there it had been placed — placed only to survive the memory of the event or actor it had fondly been intended to immortalize. It might have been the cover of a tomb, it might have been a monument designed to celebrate some great or wonderful achievement; but, whatever was its pristine use or destination, it afforded now a pleasant seat, cushioned with soft luxurious mosses, and sheltered equally from summer heat and wintry gales by the huge stem and gnarled boughs that overhung it. A lovely and romantic spot this was, so still, so lonely, so sequestered from the eye by intervening thickets, that, although situate at scarce a bowshot from the most frequented walks, it yet was rarely visited but by some passing forester, or some true lover of the undecorated face of nature. For this cause, perhaps, it had ever been a favorite haunt of Sibyl, who, when a fairy maiden of fifteen, was wont to resort thither with book, lute, or pencil, as the fancy of the moment prompted, and for no other reason had it been the usual termination of her young lover's wanderings.

What was the aim of Edgar in choosing this fair solitude to be the scene of that most sacred audience which he had come forth to demand, he could not have, perhaps, himself explained. It might be he had formed some half-confessed and indistinct idea, that here, in the familiar trysting-place, the home of such sweet recollections, the shrine of so many hopes, she would "lean to the soft side of the heart," would be more liable to yield herself to fond and passionate impressions, than to weigh matters with an equable, calm scrutiny. It might be that habit merely, and the trick of old association, had conducted his feet thither, while his mind was far removed from thought of time or place. It might be that, wise and philosophic as his spirit was, there yet lay dubiously concealed within it one of those strange superstitious touches, those creeds of the heart, not of the judgment, from which the bosoms of so few, even the coolest and most stern inquirers, can al-

together wean themselves, one of those fancies which we at all times have felt, that some peculiar spot, or hour, or person, is secretly connected with the clew and crisis of our destiny — is, as it were, the hinge whereon the portals of our fortune turn, opening to our steps the unknown paths of future good or evil.

Whatever were his thoughts, however, during their silent progress to the friar's tree, scarcely had he placed her on the monumental stone, and stretched himself before her on the dry white sand, ere he poured forth, in a voice of harmony so sweet as might have well beguiled the ear and won the heart of the most determined votaress of celibacy, a tide of language fraught with such eloquence, and yet so practical in meaning, so deep in sentiment, and yet so pointed in expression, that few lips, perhaps, but his, could have delivered it, without incurring some reproach of studied insincerity, or awakening some feeling of distrust. He told her of his hopes, his doubts, his terrors; he told her how a cloud, he knew not wherefore, had overshadowed his horizon, chilling, as it were, the very sources of his most permanent and warm affections; he told her how he valued her the most of all things earthly; the most of *all* things, save his God, his country, and his honor! How to him her wedded love would be indeed the all in all, capable of making that which else were misery the highest and most pure enjoyment; — how, to win it, he would lay down willingly rank, name, fame, fortune, everything save virtue!

He told her that, without that crowning gift, he should, though wealthier than the wealthiest, bear but a beggared heart; though girt with myriad friends, be desolate and lonely; though dwelling in his very birthplace, be a divorced and home-sick exile! He told her of the violent and ceaseless strife between his passion and his conscience, of his profound devotion to herself, battling and scarcely to be overcome by his more deep devotion to his country's weal.

"It may be," he continued, "it may be that I am but a timorous dreamer, but a trembling visionary, shaking at causeless and unreal terrors. It may be that the trials, which I shudder merely at foreseeing, shall never come

to the proof; but this is what I dread, and what, though dreading, I may not, if it come to pass, avoid or shrink from, even to win what were to me a thousand times more dear than life, the miseries of intestine war let loose to devastate our smiling country! a wild and bloody strife, dividing brother against brother, sire against son, husband, sweet Sibyl, husband against wife! A strife between a king determined to be absolute, a people to be free! If these things come to pass, though my life be barren, and my deathbed deserted, yea, though my heart be broken in the conflict, yet must I be forever the sworn soldier of my country's freedom. It may however be, Heaven grant it so! that I do falsely calculate the signs of coming wrath; it may moreover be, that, as I am, so are you a friend to liberty and justice, more than a worshipper of kings! and, if so, all shall yet be well. My father, Sibyl, my old, kind father, has proffered freely his consent, has urged me to obtain your promise, that you will be my own before this coming winter shall have made way for spring flowers, has implored me 'that he may see us happy; such is his only wish this side eternity, before he go to his long home!' Be mine, then, Sibyl, oh be mine, ere the fierce storm of war shall burst, which may divide us, and forever; be mine to cheer, to guide, to comfort, and to bless; be mine for weal and woe; for time and for eternity!"

While he was speaking, though her lips quivered often, and parted more than once, as if she would have interrupted him, though her color went and came in brief and fitful flashes, the lovely girl had never once withdrawn her eyes from his pale face, pale with the struggle of contending passions, nor relaxed her pressure of his cold, damp hand; and, as he paused from his deep-souled and eager pleading, she replied at once, though her voice faltered, and the big tears slid down her cheeks.

"It is, then," she said, "it is, then, as I dreaded! and our young hopes have been but as a morning vision! Oh, Edgar, Edgar, I have thought, I have hoped, I have prayed that these things might not be, and yet too — oh, too surely — have I known they must!" and she hurried onward with her speech, as if she feared that she should

lack the strength to act up to her resolution. "Men will say," she went on, with increasing passion, "men will say, and say *truly*, but I care not, that it is unmaidenly in me to speak in words how madly, how devotedly I love you. My hope of hopes has been, you cannot doubt it, Edgar, no! no! you cannot, to know myself your wife; and now my hopes are anguish and despair. But think not that I blame you, that I love you, honor you, adore you, one thousandth part the less, when I say, God grant me strength to bear it; when I say, that we can never, never now, be one. *Your* father has to *me* been more, more than a father. To his heart your defection—such will he term and feel it — your defection from the loyalty of your high race will strike a wound, that but one other blow could aggravate or deepen. Were I to fall off likewise, he would die, Edgar; die, and leave to us his sole bequest, a father's malison. No, no! I must stay with him, must console the old man in his barren and unfriended sorrows; must soothe his cares, and turn aside his anger, lest it wax hotter and more deadly than even you, Edgar, shall be able to endure. Nor is this all. I am a poor, weak girl, a frail, confiding creature, of a sex whose duty and whose nature is obedience; obedience to our king, our husband, our God! I argue not! I hope not, fancy not, that I can change your judgment, founded, as it must be, on firm conviction; nor would I change if I could! That which in women is nature, virtue, may well in men be weakness, cowardice! Your intellect is strong, and wise, and wonderful; mine womanish and weak; nor should I love and venerate you as I do, could you surrender up your wisdom at the bidding of my weakness.

"Therefore as I respect your scruples, respect mine also. The sapling bends, indeed, to the wild blast that bows it; but, when the hurricane is overpast, it stands no less erect than the proud oak that yielded not an inch to the storm's fury. I in my weakness, you in your strength, we are alike immovable. Yours I *can* not be now, *may* not be ever! But of this be certain, wedded or single, royalist or republican, living or in death, you only shall I love, you only honor — honor and love more deeply, that I know you greater in adherence to that which I must deem fan-

cied and erroneous duty, than did you think as I. There is one hope for us! Edgar, my Edgar, *one!* If this wild storm pass by, if the green homes of England be unstained with native blood, and how more fervently than ever shall I now pray they be so, then may we yet be happy."

The blood rushed coldly to his heart as he heard her out; nor, though he had expected every word she uttered, was the shock less stunning or the anguish lighter than if the stroke had fallen on him unaware. Too well, however, did he know, and too entirely respect, the principles which doomed him to eternal and unutterable sorrow, to speak one syllable in answer or entreaty. "One kiss," he murmured, through his set teeth, "one last kiss, my own, lost Sibyl." And she fell upon his bosom unresisting, and her white arms were twined about his neck with a convulsive clasp, and their cold lips mingled in a long embrace that had no taste of passion or of pleasure, and their tears flowed together in that gush of unchecked misery.

Before an hour elapsed Arden had left the mansion of his fathers. The old knight wondered, and was grieved, but silent; he saw, at an eye's glance, that his own hopes, his first-born's happiness, had been dashed rudely down; but, to imagine wherefore, conjecture was itself at fault. He wept upon his neck, blessed him, and sent him forth.

A pale form, indistinctly seen through the fast gathering twilight, stood in the oriel window as Edgar slowly mounted, but the burst of agonizing sobs that followed his departure was distinctly audible. Enough! Timanthes veiled the face, on which the extremity of sorrow was engraved in characters so fearful as to defy the utmost skill of human portraiture.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath, the delegated voice of God,
Which shook the nations through his lips, and blazed,
'Till vanquished senates trembled as they praised.
BYRON.—*Monody on Sheridan.*

IT was a dark and gloomy afternoon in the latter days of November, when Arden, having already gone through all the necessary steps preliminary to his entering on his novel duties, and having devoted a few days to renewing ancient intimacies, or forming new relations, with some of the most leading men of either party, took his way for the first time toward the honored precincts of St. Stephens, around the walls of which, now, alas! levelled to the ground forever, the collective eloquence of ages had shed even then a halo of more than mortal glory.

The house had been some time in session when he entered, and, to his almost irrepressible surprise, in passing to his seat, the object that first met his eye was the ungainly figure of the stranger who had succored him near Royston, habited, as heretofore described, in garments coarse, unseemly, and ill-made, standing beside the table, which at times he violently struck with his clinched hand, and speaking in a sharp, croaking voice, against delay in the discussion of some motion then before the house.

It did not seem to Edgar, as he looked hastily around him, that the members listened with much attention to the fiery but somewhat involved declamations of this worthy; but, after a few moments' survey, his notice was attracted by the bent brows and compressed lips of a considerable number of gravely-attired and stern-looking men, who sat apart even from those who were completely recognized as favorers of sweeping measures of reform, and ever and anon responded to the sentiments expressed by the speaker with a deep hum or sullen cheer of approbation. He could see, too, that Hampden, with whom he had advanced already beyond the earliest steps of friendly intercourse, was not inattentive to the words of this

strange looking personage; although at times a smile would flit across his comely features at some wild, undigested thought, or strong denunciation fiercely disproportionate to that against which it was leveled. He had not, however, much space for observation, since the orator who, it seemed, had well-nigh finished his harangue, ere he came into the assembly, now resumed his seat; and was at once succeeded by a youthful gentleman, whom Edgar recognized for Lucius Carey, Viscount Falkland, of an exterior so prepossessing, that in another man it would have been the principal attraction, though in this instance, it was but the goodly shrine of a surpassing soul. His form was slight, but elegantly framed; his countenance, of singular and softened beauty, had for its most obvious traits a low, fair forehead, from which the waves of his light brown or almost flaxen hair hung down in natural curls below his cheeks; a full blue eye, well opened and expressive; a bright complexion; and a lip, rich, ripe, and wooing as a woman's. He was clad handsomely, in doublet, short trunk hose, and cloak of dark blue velvet slashed and lined with rich white taffeta, and was in all respects a person whose appearance would denote a man of birth and bearing.* His voice, as he began to speak, was sweet and tunable, and although weak at first, increased in energy and power as he proceeded, till Arden felt that he had never listened heretofore to any one combining in so eminent a degree persuasiveness and strength of language.

From the Lord Falkland's words he quickly gathered that the measure under consideration was no other than the famous and much contested bill of general remonstrance, which, it appeared, had been at this late hour brought forward by the opposition party, when the morning had been wasted in minor and unprofitable questions, with the hope of smuggling it, as it were, through the house, during the absence of many, its most known opponents. The speech of the young nobleman was luminous, though brief; and touching in no respect on the principles or object of the bill, went clearly and directly to the point, asserting that it should not, at that irregular and most in-

* This description is accurately drawn from the original picture by Vandyke, in the collection of Lord Arundell of Wardour.

decent hour, be forced upon the assembly, unprepared, at least, if not reluctant to consider it. Loudly applauded by the moderate party, as well as by the open antagonists of the measure, throughout the whole of his speech; and not less warmly, though more sparingly, at times by its impartial and sincere espousers, Hampden, and Pym, and Hollis, he concluded with a motion that the house should presently adjourn, and that this question "should be entered upon the next morning at nine of the clock, and every clause debated, the speaker in the chair."

As he sat down, a dozen members rose at once on opposite sides, and for some minutes all was clamor and confusion, trampling of feet, loud cries of "Question!" "Order!" and "Go on!" mixed with vociferated names of favorite orators, called on to utter their opinions. At length, however, Lenthall, the speaker of the house, with his clear, sonorous voice, enforced obedience to the chair, and quiet was again restored. Lord Falkland's motion was instantly seconded by Hampden, in a few words, forcibly but simply urging the necessity that this great question should be freely discussed and openly, by all who might decide to take a part therein.

The house was cleared for question, and the adjournment carried with few dissenting voices. There was but little tarrying within the body of the house; but as they passed into the lobby and down the parliament stairs, men fell into little knots of two or three, discoursing, some on the occurrences of the discussion just concluded, and some on matters of more general and varied interest.

It was at this moment, just as Edgar fell into a group in which he had observed the figures of Hyde, in after days more celebrated as Lord Clarendon and chancellor of England, St. John, Lord Digby, Colepepper, and Hampden, all spirits in some sort congenial to each other; all being favorers, ostensibly at least, though differing in mode and measure, of reform, both in the church and state, that the orator, whom he had judged at the first sight to be Lord Falkland, passed by so closely as almost to brush his person with his cloak deeply engaged in conversation with his mysterious fellow-traveller. This latter

cast a glance of recognition toward him, accompanied by a short, unceremonious nod, though without making any pause, or breaking off in his discourse, which he continued in such tones as reached the ears of Arden.

"But verily," he said, "but verily, I see not wherefore you would have it thus put off; for this day would right quickly have decided it."

"There would not have been time enough," replied the other, shortly; "for it would sure take some debate."

"A very sorry one! a very sorry one, my lord, if any," answered the Puritan, who was already passing out of sight, when Edgar touched the shoulder of John Hampden, whom he had previously addressed. "I pray you, of your courtesy," he whispered, "Master Hampden; I pray you, tell me, who is that slovenly and clownish-looking man in converse with my lord of Falkland! You know him, I think, for I see he is on your side, by his warm speech to-day."

"That sloven," * answered Hampden — and, in after days, when the undaunted breast of him who spoke was mouldering in its bloody cerements, not the least noble victim of that lamentable strife, his auditor remembered those prophetic words—"whom you see before you, hath no ornament in his speech. That sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the king, which God forbid! in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

"Indeed!" said Arden, thoughtfully, "indeed! I had not thought of him so highly. And yet I do believe, nay, I am well assured, I have encountered him before. His name—"

"His name is Cromwell," replied the patriot; "Oliver Cromwell, member now for the good town of Cambridge, and little known as yet, or listened to, save by a few austere religionists; yet of great parts! unwearied diligence, undaunted courage, penetration that intuitively reads the wariest hearts, and perseverance that will yield to nothing human! That you have met him I can well believe, at

* This very remarkably and prophetic speech was actually uttered by Hampden, in reply to the question, as given above, of Lord Digby, in the first year of the Long Parliament; i. e., at a date a little *earlier* than that assigned to it in the text.

the least he knows, thinks, and speaks of *you* highly! You will be here to-morrow, Master Arden," he continued, after a momentary pause; "you will be here to-morrow; and with *us*, I trust! If we should lose this bill, it will, I fear me much, go hard with England's liberties."

"Here I shall be, past question," answered Edgar. "I scarce should hold myself an honest man were I to quit my station in the crisis of the storm; although," he continued, with a smile, "although that station be a new one, and its occupant but strange and inexperienced. Here shall I be, but more you must not ask of me. How I shall vote, or if indeed at all, till I have heard both reasons and objections, I may not easily decide. Wherefore, good Master Hamden, if you do care, in truth, for the assistance of my vote, you were best call to aid that eloquence and depth of reasoning whereof I hear men bear such testimony; and so convince me that my country's weal requires it at my hand! Give you good-night, fair gentlemen," he added, with a courteous motion toward the company; "we meet again to-morrow."

"If you be not in more than common haste," said Hampden, laying a slight detention on his arm, as he turned round to leave the lobby, "I will entreat you tarry, while I speak ten words with my Lord Digby. Your lodging lies, if I mistake not, this side Charing; and my road is the same. If you can wait on me five minutes at the farthest, I will rejoice to have your homeward company; and will upon the way, I do assure you, exert what reasons I possess to win you to conviction."

Arden assented. Nor did the minutes which elapsed while that high-minded patriot remonstrated, as it would seem by his quick, energetic whispers, with the tergiversating noble, pass heavily, as he conversed with the distinguished men who seemed to give—desirous each, perhaps, of winning to his respective faction a partisan so like to prove of weight in the then equally poised state of parties—that eager and respectful heed to every word he uttered, which cannot fail to please the minds even of those the least accessible to ordinary adulation. With a glance pregnant of meaning, and an admonition strongly

urged, although its import could not be distinguished by the bystanders, Hampden turned from Lord Digby and announced his readiness to walk, flinging his cloak in several folds over his left arm, and bringing round his rapier's hilt to meet his grasp if needed; precautions not uncalled for in those times of fierce and virulent commotion.

As they passed down the stairs, the men in waiting recognized their masters, and fell at once into their places; two moving on in front with lighted links or flambeaux, necessary in those days, when the most frequented thoroughfares of the metropolis could boast few lamps but those which graced the residence of some great noble, and two stepping along three paces in the rear, their eyes warily moving to and fro, and watching with keen scrutiny the air of every passenger who met or overtook them; and their hands in frequent contact with the pommels of their swords.

For, notwithstanding the eulogium passed some years before by a French resident of high distinction on the orderly and peaceful regulation of the English capital, in honorable contrast to the debauched and dangerous turbulence of Paris, party spirit at this time ran to such a height, and tumults were so constant between the factions recently accommodated with distinctive titles of cavaliers and roundheads—tumults in which much blood was spilt and even some lives lost, the sturdy citizens resisting with their bats and cudgels the rapiers of the disbanded officers and other desperadoes ever to be found about the palace of Whitehall — that few, whose purses could maintain such followers, esteemed it safe to walk the streets by night without their armed attendance; particularly such as were obnoxious to assault, or insult at the least, in consequence of party eminence or of political renown.

At a few steps distance from the house, they encountered a stout body of the train-bands, well equipped with muskets, swords, and bandoleers, forming a portion of the guards which, on the news of the attempt against Argyle and Hamilton, the Commons had required to be detailed for their protection by the Earl of Essex, at that time

general-in-chief on this side Trent; and to this it might perhaps in some degree be owing, that during their walk homeward no circumstance of annoyance or attack occurred to interrupt the converse of these high-minded men; who, though but newly and imperfectly acquainted, already felt, each for the other, that reverential admiration which is often the precursor to familiar friendship. At Arden's lodging door, with feelings of increased respect, and with renewed promises of a meeting on the morrow, they then parted; the one hastening to some nightly conclave, there to deliberate with his associate patriots on measures rife with England's weal; the other to stretch his limbs upon a sleepless couch, and ponder over the effects of his accession to the popular party on his own fate and fortunes. Kind sleep, however, came at last, to seal up for a little space the sources of his deep disquietude, and to allay, until another sun should wake him to fresh struggles, fresh anxieties, the feverish tumults of his bosom. Still, so engrossing was the subject which last had occupied his mind before he sunk into slumber, and so powerful the operation of his spirit even while the body was buried in what seemed absolute oblivion, that scarcely had the earliest indications of the wintry twilight crept through the fogs of the near river, ere he awoke, and, starting instantly from his bed, began to do his garments on, summoning the while his dilatory followers to prepare his morning meal.

But, notwithstanding all his haste, so gloomy was the dawning, and so late, at that drear season, the uprising of the sun, that he had scarce the time to snatch a hurried morsel before his horses were announced to bear him to St. Stephen's, and, almost at the self-same instant, two gentlemen to speak with Master Arden!—and, with the word, John Hampden entered the apartment, accompanied by a person of most "unusual" and forbidding aspect. Austere, fanatical, and gloomy he might have been pronounced at the first sight by any person moderately skillful at deciphering men's characters from the expression of their features. His dress would not, perhaps, entirely bear out the charge — for such, and a most grave one, was it deemed by the wild cavaliers—of Puritanism;

for, although uniform and rather grave in color, it yet was cut with attention to the prevailing mode, as well as to the setting off a person infinitely less ungainly than his countenance was harsh and extraordinary. His hat, too, which he carried in his hand, was decorated with a feather, and his sword hung from a shoulder-knot adorned with fringe and tassels.

Before, however, Edgar had well surveyed the stranger, he was addressed by his companion of the previous evening. "We have, I fear, intruded somewhat on your privacy," he said, "at this unwonted hour, I and my good friend, Harry Vane the younger; whom I beseech you, Master Arden, know as such; right soon, I trust, to stand in similar relation to yourself; but we were both desirous of your company this morning to the house, and I would fain propose that you shall for the present occupy a seat nigh mine. Till you shall be in some degree accustomed to the usages and method of the house, it may be my experience shall in somewhat profit you; and I fear not to make this offer, seeing that, should you find hereafter that your conscience may not justify your being one of us, I shall provide that none may look on you as a defaulter from our party; and I have heard and seen enough, methinks, already of your character and bearing to know that, even should you differ from us as to the quality or manner, you are not like to be against us as to the needfulness of some reform; so that to be seen accompanying one so hateful to the courtly faction as John Hampden, shall in no sort prevent you of advancement."

"Most thankfully," said Edgar, after exchanging courtesies with Vane, "do I accept your offer; the rather, that as yet I know not, though I fain would learn, the persons of many among your famous orators; and for the rest, my vote will not, nor my opinion either, be affected anywise by sitting in this place or that. But now, if I mistake not, time is urgent, and we should be on our way. Ride you, fair gentlemen? My horses wait even now; but if you walked thus far I shall dismiss them—"

"We came on horseback, and it is indeed full time we

were at the house; the bells rang nine some time ere we arrived," replied Sir Harry. "We will, if it please you, get us at once to horse."

The pace at which they rode, when they had mounted, prevented the possibility of any serious or connected conversation, and but few minutes were consumed in the brief gallop that brought them to the low-browed portal of St. Stephen's. The privates of the civic guard on duty at the door, presented arms, as if to some high officer, as the patriot leaders passed them; and it was not long ere they were seated all together in the body of the house, at no great distance from the speaker's chair. The galleries were crowded, as it seemed, well nigh to suffocacation, not with the ordinary idlers who resorted thither only to dissipate the tedium of an hour not otherwise employed, but with men whose anxious faces, and limbs that almost trembled with excitement, announced the deep and painful interest they took in the debate, which had commenced already; and with a spirit so unusual at the opening of a measure as might be held a sure prognostic of the fiery and determined ardor with which it would be carried on ere it might come to question.

At the moment when they entered, Hollis was on his legs, urging with logical and beautiful precision the absolute necessity of fixing, and on grounds so sure that they should never more be moved, the limits between right constitutional prerogative and absolute despotic power; pointing out the gradual and successive innovations by which the ruling monarch had encroached on all the liberties, both civil and religious, of the English people; the tampering with jesuited Papists; the evident dislike to parliaments; the most illegal levyings of money by violent and arbitrary contribution; the billeting of irresponsible and lawless soldiery on private householders; the imprisoning of members contrary to privilege of parliament, for words or sentiments expressed therein—"One of whom," he proceeded—"one noble, and eloquent, and wise, and loyal—than whom no better subject breathed the breath of life within the girt of the four seas that compass Britain—died—miserably died within the walls of an illegal and inquisitorial dungeon—

for want of natural refreshment! Whose blood," he added, in loud and pealing tones, that woke an echo in the breast of every free-souled man, "whose blood of life, untimely and unrighteously dried up, still cries, cries even from the dungeon walls wherein yet lies the mouldering clay whence persecution drove the free and fearless spirit, still cries, I say, to every English heart, cries trumpet-tongued for vengeance!"

Wildly and fiercely rose the mingled shout—for it was nothing less—of approbation and disgust. "Eliot!" exclaimed one bolder than the rest, making aloud the application which all had tacitly perceived; "Eliot! the murdered Eliot!" while the hall rang with diverse cries of "Treason!" "Vengeance!" "Order!" the latter word prevailing gradually, even as the rest subsided, till the orator again obtained a clear field for his manly elocution.

With a lower voice and less impassioned manner, he then proceeded to recount a train of grievances that seemed to defy enumeration; the new and unfair tax of ship-money—the seas ill-guarded, and the mariners left naked to the violence of Turkish pirates—the depopulating of the city by the imposition of enormous fines—the seizing of the merchants' money in the mint—the shameless project of brass coinage—the barbarous and reckless censures of self-constituted courts—"with their imprisoning and banishing—their stigmatizing, gagging, scourging, and mutilating—ay! I said *mutilating!*" he went on, with energy befitting well his subject—"mutilating the free limbs of uncondemned and unoffending Britons!"

"And I say this," he cried, louder and clearer yet, "I say this, not of an Ottoman Divan—not of a Spanish Inquisition—but of an English Chamber!—of a Star Chamber HERE! Here, in the land of Magna Charta!—Here, where the code of Alfred is not as yet forgotten or extinct! A chamber judging *not* by law, and trying *not* by jury! A chamber forcing men to yield their substance to be wasted in the raising armies and equipping fleets—for what?—what but to compel their fellows, their Protestant and pious brethren, to worship HIM who made them, according, not to conscience nor to faith, but to the will of painted potsherds!—scarlet iniquities!—hoary and

venerable sins!—wolves in sheep's clothing!—faithless and hireling shepherds, hounding the dogs upon the flock which they should guard and cherish!—prebends, and deans, and bishops!"

And, amid a tumult of applause, the popular and weighty orator resumed his seat, while Hyde uprose, not, as it seemed, to answer, but to palliate, to palter, to procrastinate; for not once did he summon courage to question or deny that which no earthly wit or wisdom could disprove. And fiercely as the measure was discussed, it was yet most remarkable that not one of the royal partisans, maintaining, as they did most resolutely, the debate from morning till past midnight, spoke so much as a word to the denial of these charges; urging, only, the wantonness of representing with such sharp reflections things, some of which already were amended, and others in fair state of promise toward adjustment; the impolicy of alienating more the good will of the king, now well disposed to gracious reformation; and, above all, the wickedness of thus infusing jealousies, and strife, and discord into the bosom of a state at this time flourishing, as some had the courage to add, beyond all previous precedent in the fair growth of freedom.

All this made forcible impression on the clear mind of Arden, as he listened with enthusiastic feelings, it is true, but still with calm discrimination, to the successive bursts, sometimes of eloquence, thrilling, sublime, and almost superhuman in its majesty, sometimes of coarse, fanatical, and phrensied ravings—while Glyn and Maynard, Cromwell and Pym, and lastly, the unrivalled Hampden, advocated this great measure—equals all, if not in perspicuity of argument or vividness of torrent elocution, if not in talent or ability, at least in truth and fervor, and in that single-minded earnestness which proved past doubt their genuine and deep sincerity.

At first he waited with strong interest the rising of some champion who should turn, or at the least dispute, the triumph with the speakers of the liberal party; then, as one after one they took their places at the table, and spoke their speeches, varied in vigor and in brilliance, but monotonous in argument, or rather in the want of it, a

sense of disappointment overcame him; and by slow degrees the strong conviction gained, that the cause must be indeed vicious and feeble for which its most devoted favorers, wise, eloquent, and witty as confessedly they were, had nothing to advance beyond what he had that day heard with mingled feelings of contempt and wonder.

Hours fled away like moments; and before Edgar knew that it was noon, evening fell dark on the discussion; then neither party willing to adjourn, candles were called for, and the strife of words went on, waxing more wild and fierce as each successive speaker added his mite of fuel to the fast-kindling blaze. Meantime the house grew thinner, as the weary and the weak, the delicate in health or frail in years, reluctantly departed, actually worn out by the lassitude that succeeds ever to unnatural excitement; and the arena of the mental gladiators became more open to their virulent contention. And still, at each succeeding pause, the liberal party seemed to gain in strength; the mighty hum of approbation rose more audibly at every bold and popular sentiment; while the cheers of the diminished royalists now failed to rouse their flagging and disheartened orators.

So wondrous was the prevalent excitement, that it drove even the calm, dispassioned blood of Arden dancing through all his veins like streams of liquid fire; and he found himself ere long lending his breath to swell the shout of admiration that followed every sentence uttered by the latter speakers. At length the house divided on the passing of the bill; and however certain the result had seemed while distant, so thickly mustered the opponents of the measure, that many an honest heart fluttered in doubt, and many a face of England's noblest sons was dark as midnight with despondency.

During the moment of confusion which always must occur at such a crisis, a whisper fell upon the ear of Edgar, a low, stern whisper, not addressed to him, nor at that instant comprehended, uttered, as he fancied, in the sneering tones of St. John. "Look now!" it said, "look now, friend Oliver, to your most promising recruit!" The answer came, though he saw not the speaker, in the harsh voice of Cromwell; "Nay, verily!

but do thou look; and thine eyes shall see the truth of that I told thee!"

All, at the time, passed with the speed and nearly with the tumult of a whirlwind; nor, although afterward he felt assured that the words had reference to himself, did they then penetrate beyond his outward ear. Without a momentary doubt, a thought of hesitation, Edgar stepped forth, and sealed the downfall of his private fortunes by the vote which he recorded in the cause of England's liberty. A small majority of but eleven voices passed that eventful bill, the loss of which would have exiled hundreds, the best and wisest of the land, driving them forth to seek, amid the snow-clad wilds of the New England shore, what they had then despaired at home, "freedom to worship God."

Scarce had the hearty cheering which followed this announcement ended, ere Hampden rose again, to move "that there might be an order entered for the present printing of it;" and straightway, as if all that had preceded it were but the prelude and slight skirmish which so generally leads to a pitched battle, a debate—if that which was all animosity, and virulence, and fury, can be called debate—ensued, which speedily effaced all recollection of the previous struggle, and had well-nigh steeped the hands of the contending factions in each other's gore.

Hyde started to his feet the first, praying that he might have permission to enter his protest, believing, as he said, such printing of the bill, without concurrence of the lords, to be alike unprecedented and illegal; and, ere he had well ended, up sprang Jeffry Palmer, a member of high standing in the house for wisdom and experience, no less than for distinguished talent, with flashing features and a voice that quivered with hot passion, moving "that he likewise might protest!"

The mildest and most stately of demeanor among the assembled counselors might be seen with blood-shot eyes, and tones husky and cracked with clamoring; and the more sullen and fanatical sitting with teeth hard set, and hands upon their hilts, as if but waiting for a voice to cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," or some other text of warlike and blood-thirsty import, be-

fore they should betake them, in their own language, to the carnal weapon.

So critical, indeed, was the conjuncture of affairs, and to such lengths had private pique and public animosity been carried, among men all armed in token of their gentle birth, that, writing coolly in his journal after the heat and passion of the contest had gone by, Sir Philip Warwick has recorded, that "when they voted it, I thought we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death; for we, like Joab and Abner's young men, had catched at each other's locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented us, and led us to defer our angry debate until next morning." And so in truth it was; for at two of the clock past midnight, when he saw that nothing could be hoped in the then temper of the house, that wise and upright statesmen moved an adjournment until two of the next afternoon, prescribing motives so replete with good sense and good feeling, that none so stubborn as could, with any show of right, gainsay him.

Worn out and wearied, body and mind alike, with the protracted contest, men of both parties mingled hurriedly as they flocked homeward; and again it was the chance of Arden strangely enough to be ear-witness to a conversation between Cromwell and Lord Falkland. The former he had joined, hard by the foot of the great staircase, desiring in some degree to cultivate relations with a man whose words and aspect had imbued him with a feeling which he could not well account for or define, but which in after days he mentioned as a prophetic awe, for that he was in presence of a spirit mightier than his own. The latter overtook them suddenly, and was passing onward at the first without addressing either, till he caught the eye of Cromwell. "Ha!" he said, with a quiet smile, not wholly free from irony — "Ha! Master Cromwell, think you there hath been a debate to-day?"

"Another time," replied the Puritan — "another time, and I will take your word — but verily, I say to you — verily, as the Lord Jehovah liveth, had this remonstrance been rejected, then had I sold mine all of worldly sub-

stance on the morrow — ay! and had taken up my staff, and girt me with my sword upon my thigh, and never had seen England any more!"

"Nor you alone, perchance!" answered the youthful noble, after a moment of reflection. "Methinks I have heard others named for a like resolution!"

"Perchance!— Me no perchance!" cried Oliver, with a triumphant smile. "Had the malignants carried it, I tell you that their victory had robbed old England of her trustiest spirits! But now, my lord, mark well my words! — and you too, friend — if that you be, as I do partly think you are — and if you be not, and I be in error, then may the Lord enlighten and amend you — a friend to liberty, mark well my words! There shall be no stint more, nor let, nor hinderance! Papists and tyrants in this soon-to-be-regenerated land shall no more hold dominion! The name of Englishman, now scorned and scoffed at throughout Europe — you, Edgar Arden, *you* do know the truth of that which I aver — shall be as far and wide revered as ever was the name of antique Roman! For verily I tell you — and I tell you truth — that now the Lord's good time hath come, when he shall choose him out a MAN! I say not whom — nor were it meet that I, the vilest and most worthless of his instruments, should judge whom the Lord listeth to appoint — but verily, I say, a MAN, who shall bring mighty things to pass in Israel!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

Lo! how 't is ever on the calmest day,
When the breeze stirs not i' the topmost bough
The aspen's fitful leaf, when the great clouds
Hang balanced in the silent sultry air,
When earth and ocean sleep in dull repose
Securely tranquil, that the mustered storm
Rends the hot calm which bred it.

ANON.

AFTER that mighty trial of the strength of parties, the bill of general remonstrance, had passed through the house, there followed a short pause; a lull, as it were, in the loud tempest of commotion, a breathing-space snatched from the midst of battle.

With the exception of a short and somewhat turbulent debate on the day following that of the main question, originating in a wish on the part of the Puritanic leaders to punish those who had protested on the previous night, but resulting merely in a penalty of form inflicted on one person, Jeffry Palmer, the commons seemed to relax in the vigor of their defensive warfare against the crown. The bill for regulation of the militia and prevention of forcible impressment, unless in case of actual invasion, was, it is true, brought forward, but without any of that inveterate and rancorous spirit which had signalized their earlier measures.

The king, on his return from Scotland, was received, chiefly in consequence of the exertions of Sir Richard Gourney, the lord mayor of London, an active and uncompromising loyalist, with loud, if not sincere, manifestations of welcome and affection; was feasted at the Guildhall with more than ordinary splendor, and hailed, as he passed to and fro the city, with thundering acclamations by the wavering and worthless populace. A farther triumph awaited him in the address presented at his residence of Hampton Court, by aldermen deputed from the city, requesting him to take up his abode among them, and to hold his court, as heretofore, in his palace of Whitehall.

This loyal and well-timed address, reputed, as it was, to be distasteful in no small degree to parliament, was graciously accepted; the deputies were all knighted, and the request was granted joyfully. The bills, moreover, most obnoxious to the king, that principally which would exclude the bishops' votes, made but slow progress, and, even should they pass the commons, were not expected to receive the sanction of the lords. Falkland and Colepepper, heretofore active members of the reforming party, although moderate and wary, now having taken office openly, the former being secretary of state in lieu of Vane, the latter chancellor of the exchequer, held nightly conferences at the house of Hyde for the well and wisely ordering the shaken and dismantled principles of government. These virtuous men and unselfish patriots would, it now seems probable, have met with eminent success in their beneficent and patriotic measures, had it not been for secret influences and the prevalence of counsellors behind the throne, unseen and unsuspected, but exercising, for ends most infamous and selfish, a power, to which, unhappily for him and for his kingdom, the mind of Charles, easily led, and prone to arbitrary counsels, though obstinate and inaccessible to anything of argument unsuited to his own opinions, yielded complete obedience. Such was the state of matters, things gradually looking brighter and more bright for the royal party, and the remonstrant leaders, Hampden especially, not only becoming less violent in their opposition, but beginning to judge more favorably of the king's motives and intent, when the insane and childish protest of the bishops, instigated to it by the proud and angry Williams, was sent forth, declaring "all laws, orders, votes, resolutions, and determinations already passed, or such as shall hereafter pass, during their absence from that most honorable house," compulsory, as they affirmed it, "null and of none effect." The consequence was an immediate and almost unanimous vote, both of the lords and commons, for the committal of the prelates to the tower, one solitary member only so far opposing it, as to declare that he believed them utterly insane, and therefore recommended Bedlam, rather than the tower, as a fit place for their detention.

Then came reports of plots, rumors of aggressions meditated on the lower house, doubts, and despondencies, and wrath, and panics! It was believed on all sides, that, without confident assurance of support, the bishops would not have dared to rush to such extremities. Petitions were poured in from every quarter! One was received from the city, setting forth that, since their loyal congratulations on his majesty's return had been misconstrued as though they would disown the doings of the parliament, they now declared their full resolve to live and die with them for the good of the commonwealth. Addresses multiplied, and were accompanied, even to the palace, by such crowds, that, in a message to the common council, the king complained of the tumultuous assemblages daily increasing, to the disturbance of his palace of Whitehall.

On the same day the parliament petitioned him to grant to them a guard, commanded by the Earl of Essex — that ordered for their protection during his absence in the north having been instantly disbanded on his late return— on account of the malignant party now daring openly to threaten them with violence. To this request, reasonable as after events proved it to have been, the self-willed monarch returned a negative, though offering that such a guard should wait on them, under a leader of his own choice, wholly subservient to his will, "as he would be answerable for to Almighty God!" This proposition they of course declined, perceiving, doubtless, that the guard so ordered would be more like to militate against their liberties, if not their persons, than to defend them from external outrage. It was upon the very day that followed this insidious offer—for such it must be deemed—that, urged by his worst counsellor, the false and faithless Henrietta, to that most rash and headlong step which rendered his affairs forever irretrievable, and reconciliation with his subjects hopeless, elated still by his reception in the city, and heedless of the daily proofs of public feeling and opinion, he went on to commit his last and desperate aggression on the privilege of parliament. By that aggression, had they tamely borne it, his throne would have been fixed forever on the firm basis of despotic rule, and England would have lain a fettered captive at his tyrannous foot-

stool. It was on the next day, while the protestation, that he would be answerable to Almighty God for the safe-guarding of their liberties and persons, was yet fresh on his lips, that he struck that blow at the very existence of parliaments, which, had it fallen as intended, must have destroyed them root and branch. For, on the afternoon of that eventful day, Herbert, the king's attorney-general, entered the house of peers, then sitting, and, producing a paper in the king's own writing, read it aloud. By this the Lord Kimbolton, present there and then—and of the commons, Denzil Hollis, and Sir Arthur Hazlerig, Pym, Strode, and Hampden, stood each and all accused of treason, as conspirators against the king and constitution.

The peers sat actually panic-stricken and aghast at this tremendous stroke of folly and misgovernment, hearing in sullen silence the grave accusation, while Kimbolton, springing to his feet, with eloquent and strenuous indignation, professed his total innocence; nor was there any lord so hardy to so much as move for his committal on his majesty's behalf. Meanwhile the commons house was entered by the king's sergeant, demanding that the speaker should deliver up the bodies of the members named above, to answer to a charge of treason, bearing no warrant or authority from magistrate or counsellor, but acting solely at the king s behest, and without intervention of the law.

News came at the same instant that the private lodgings of those members had been visited by royal messengers, their trunks and studies sealed up, and their papers violently seized. With bold and masculine resolve, well suited to the peril of the crisis, the house met that haughty and high-handed insolence! The sergeant, having gone through his message, was desired to avoid the chamber; but word was sent to the monarch by a deputation, assuring him those members should be instantly forthcoming so soon as any *legal* charge should be preferred against them, the house declaring, by a powerful vote, those violent acts of seizure breaches of privilege, audacious, and illegal; empowering their members to resist; calling on all men to abet and aid them in resisting such attempts upon their liberties as freeborn Britons; and instantly

adjourning, for the night, until the wonted hour on the morrow.

It was at a late hour in the evening of this fatal day that several ladies of the court, richly and splendidly attired, might have been seen collected in a proud saloon, decked with the master-pieces of Vandyke and Rubens, with tapestries of Gobelins and Arras hangings, with cabinets of buhl and marquetry, buffets of antique golden plate and yet more costly porcelain, and all those priceless luxuries which mark a royal dwelling. Among this glittering group, and seemingly its principal, was one, a lady of low, slender stature, and a shape slightly awry, though, by skill of her tire-woman, this defect was so disguised as to be scarce perceptible. Her hands were delicate, and gemmed, as were her ears, her neck, the bosom of her robe, and the rich volumes of her jet-black hair, with Indian brilliants. Her features were agreeable and sprightly, yet such as could not properly be praised as regular or beautiful; a pair of bright black eyes and a coquettish smile forming their chief attraction. Her conversation, lively, and perhaps even brilliant, though flippant and unguarded, was listened to by her attendant ladies, and by the only cavalier admitted to the presence, a man of noble bearing, easy yet dignified, and withal in person eminently handsome, with an attention so profound that it denoted, even without the bended knee and the averted back, the speaker to be one of royal rank. Music and cards were in the chamber, and a most lovely girl, of some seventeen or eighteen years, was dancing to the amatory strains of some concealed musician, in a style which would be now esteemed far too voluptuous, if not absolutely meretricious, to be performed by the chaste limbs of ladies, or looked upon by modest eyes. Yet neither lansquenet, nor the soft melody, nor the exciting graces of the beautiful dancer, appeared sufficient to banish some uneasiness which lowered over that fair company.

The brow of Henrietta, for she it was, was dark and gloomy, much against its wont, and her ill-humor had been so far contagious as to affect her bright companions with all the outward signs of discontent and sorrow. While she was talking earnestly to the Lord Digby, now

—since the flight of Jermyn, her adulterous paramour—her most beloved and trusty counsellor, a short and hasty step was heard without, accompanied by a slight bustle, as if some more distinguished personage had suddenly and by surprise come on the unexpectant chamberlains and pages, sole inmates of the ante-chamber. The door of polished oak flew open, and, bearing evident marks of discomposure in his compressed lips and overshadowed brow, a gentleman of graceful presence entered the apartment. Of that time of life when the rashness and the fire of youth are tempered by the sedateness of increasing years, although the face had lost no trait of its attraction, nor the limbs of their alert and agile motion, Charles Stuart —for the new comer was no other — was of a middle height, but strong and well proportioned, excepting that his legs were triflingly bowed outward, a circumstance which, while detracting somewhat from the grace and symmetry of his appearance, was favorable more than otherwise to his accustomed exercise of horsemanship — to which, indeed, it might have been in some sort owing. His visage, of a just and oval form, was pleasing, although dark-complexioned; his features regular and comely, with a full dark eye; gentle, and somewhat dull in its expression, unless its owner were aroused to sudden anger, when it would kindle up and flash as brightly as the keenest; he wore mustaches, somewhat unusually large and curling upward, with a small pointed beard of that precise and formal cut which is so often met with in the portraits of Vandyke. The most remarkable trait, however, of his whole appearance, was that continual cloud of mild and softened melancholy from which his dignified and stately aspect rarely or never brightened; for, even when he smiled, it was a faint and transient flash, scarce clearing up the gloom of that accustomed sadness which brooded over his countenance — although his disposition was cheerful more than otherwise, and, if not buoyant, certainly neither mournful nor despondent — and which, as fanciful and superstitious men have oftentimes imagined, is ominous of an untimely end. His dress, of plain black velvet, slashed and lined with satin, differed in nothing—save that upon the left side of his cloak glittered

the diamond star belonging to the order of the garter — from the garb of any private gentleman. He wore his hat above his sable hair, long-curled and flowing, and in his hand he carried a strong cane or ferule, with a crutch head of gold, which he struck passionately upon the carpet as he entered.

"The undutiful, disloyal varlets!" he exclaimed, in tones of strong excitement. "The false, rebellious knaves! — to deal thus with their sovereign!" — and for several moments he paced to and fro the room, regardless of the eager entreaties of his affrighted wife to speak the cause of his distemperature.

"A message!" he burst forth at length, but in a voice broken and faltering with passion. "To me! to me a message! I tell you, Marie, an' they have their will, I may indeed be *called* your majesty — be served upon the knee—be waited on bareheaded—but I shall be no more a king — nay, ten times less the master even of myself, than the most lowly gentleman in all my wide dominions. But so shall it not be! — No! Never!—never!" and in a few disjointed sentences he told her how he had demanded of the parliament the bodies of six members, on a charge of treason against himself and them —and had received, not prompt obedience to his orders, but a message!

"And is it possible," she cried, artful and evil woman that she was, in feigned astonishment and indignation — "and is it possible, my lord, that you, you, heir to such a line of mighty sovereigns, you, monarch of Great Britain — will be thus braved and thwarted, will be controlled, defied, and trampled on by such a scum of low and scurvy fellows as this parliament? That you will brook to have your crown robbed of its brightest jewels of prerogative, your sceptre wrested from your hands without one struggle? Would, wretched princess that I am, oh, would to God that I had tarried in my own glorious France, or that I had been wedded to a MAN!"

"Madam, go to!" the king retorted sharply — for, all uxorious as he was, and prone to hold her slightest words as mandates to his will, his temper, naturally hasty and unpliant, was aggravated now, even beyond its wont, by

the commingled influence of anger and irresolution. "Be silent, and dare not impugn our energy and courage. England and you shall know, and that right speedily, that neither will Charles Stuart brook insolence at home, nor usurpation of his rights abroad! And for these rash and reckless rogues! they too shall learn that I am yet a king!"

"Well said! — well said, my gracious sovereign!" exclaimed Digby, with an exulting voice and an elated eye. "Better to crush at once this spawn of venomous and vicious serpents in the dark den wherein they have engendered, than one by one to scotch them, when they shall have crawled forth to pollute the blessed daylight, and swelled from grovelling reptiles to the full growth of rampant dragons!"

"In this," cried Henrietta, "in this most noble wrath, again I recognize the worthiest, the most high-souled of men! To-morrow shalt thou pull these vile rogues by the ears from out their infamous cabal! Else never look me in the face again!"

"Brave girl," replied the facile king, rueing already his late burst of anger, "Brave, brave Marie, and beautiful as brave!" and, throwing one arm round her waist, he led her to a sofa at the farthest end of the saloon, where, seating himself at her side, he hung, with all the manifest and ardent passion of a boy-lover over the wily Delilah, who, prodigal in secret to another than himself of her voluptuous charms, had yet the perfidy, and with it too the power, to woo him, by a scanty and reluctant show of public fondness, to measures, her only interest in which was to bring back a banished lover to her guilty arms, how ruinous soever they might be, she recked not, to her too trusting husband.

CHAPTER X.

THE KING AND THE COMMONS.

> There is a bondage worse, far worse to bear
> Than his who breathes, by roof and floor and wall
> Pent in, a tyrant's solitary thrall;
> 'T is he who walks about in the open air,
> One of a nation who, henceforth, must wear
> Their fetters in their soul.
>
> WORDSWORTH.—*Sonnets to Liberty.*

DURING the first part of the night which followed this aggression of the monarch, the city was all tumult and confusion; men running to and fro, in crowds or singly, conversing eagerly with white and panic-stricken visages, women, increasing, with their shrill and anxious voices, the wild din, and children, long hours past the wonted time when they should have been sleeping peacefully in their warm chambers, wandering to and fro, with looks of frightened and inquiring wonder cast upward toward the agitated features of their parents. But the necessity of rest will conquer even the quickest and most moving causes of excitement; and ere the stars began to pale in the cold, frosty sky, the thoroughfares of the metropolis were quiet and deserted as though no turbulence of party strife had ever interrupted their security and silence. The morning broke in its due season, and the only thing observable in the demeanor of the groups who gradually filled the streets, passing this way or that, as men engaged in their accustomed avocations, in their pursuits of profit or of pleasure, was an air of general and pervading sternness, not merely gloom, but resolute and dark determination. There was no light or trifling conversation; no jests; no laughter. Whatever of discourse seemed absolutely needful was couched in brief, pithy sentences, and uttered in a tone not Puritanic nor morose, but sad, and at the same time full of energy, grave and severe, and well-nigh awful in its character. Then, as the day advanced, the members of the lower house might be seen hurrying toward St. Stephen's, some mounted,

some on foot, but all accompanied by at least one retainer; and these were greeted severally by the multitude with shouts of approbation, or with groans of censure and reviling, accordingly as they were known for men of popular or loyal principles.

Meanwhile, in a small chamber of the palace at Whitehall, richly adorned with painted walls and splendid oaken carvings, and overlooking, from its lofty casements, the street through which the crowds were flowing toward the parliament, sat Henrietta, with a single lady, and a page awaiting, near the door of the apartment, the pleasure of his royal mistress. A frame filled with embroidery stood before her, at which it seemed she had but recently been occupied; though now she held a volume of some French romance, from which, however, her eyes glanced so often toward the windows, attracted by the mingled clamors of applause and hatred, rising at times even until they penetrated her reluctant ears, as to denote that little of her mind was given to the wild, witty author who apparently engaged her. Her eyes were full of bright and keen excitement; a hectic flush glowed in a spot of vivid crimson high up on either cheek, and her hands trembled with a visible and nervous agitation. Her conversation, also, if the light and frivolous sentences that fell from her lips at intervals merited such a title, was broken, interrupted, and evidently embarrassed by some internal conflict which she hesitated to disclose. For a considerable time she struggled to maintain a semblance of composure; but, as the hours passed onward, her trepidation became more and more apparent. At every step that sounded in the long corridors, at every closing of a distant door, she started; and once or twice, when the rattle of a carriage or the clatter of a horse's hoofs appeared to cease before the gates, she actually hurried to the balcony and gazed abroad into the town, exposing herself, as if unwittingly, to the rude stare of the transient multitudes, who failed to greet her with the smallest tokens of affection or respect. Twice or thrice, ere the bells chimed ten, the page in waiting was dispatched to learn whether no tidings had arrived from parliament; and each time he returned the bearer of a

negative, a peevish exclamation of disgust escaped her, not unnoticed by the lady who attended on her privacy. At length, peal after peal, the steeples rang forth ten, and then, with an exulting smile, as though she could contain herself no longer — "Rejoice!" she cried, in high, triumphant tones—"Rejoice, my Carlisle — for ere now the king is master in his states — ay! and his enemies are all in custody!"

"His enemies, your grace?" exclaimed the patriotic lady, to whom, with indiscretion equalled only by that of the rash, doting husband whom she thus betrayed, she had divulged her secret—"His enemies?"

"His enemies, said I?" returned the queen, in accents sharper than before. "In truth, then, I spake wrongly! His traitors, rather! His false, rebellious, and bloodthirsty traitors—by God's help, now his captives—Hampden, and Pym, and all their rabble rout!"

And, as she spoke, sweeping across the room with such a port as would have well beseemed a Britomart striding upon the prostrate necks of Romans, in their turn subdued and humbled, and entering again the balcony, she cast a wistful glance down the long avenue. But scarcely had she turned her back before the high-born lady whom she had addressed, hastily tore a leaf from out her tablets, traced on it some half dozen words, and pleading, on the queen's return, some casual indisposition, quietly left the chamber. Ten minutes had not well elapsed ere she reëntered it; nor would the change in her demeanor have escaped the close and subtle watchfulness of her imperial mistress, had not that royal lady been herself perturbed too deeply to investigate the mood of others. The Countess of Carlisle's features, cast in the purest and calmest mould of conscious aristocracy, had worn throughout the morning an expression of grave feminine anxiety, and her broad placid eye had followed, with a quiet yet observing scrutiny, every unwonted movement, every nervous start, and every change of color that had resulted from the queen's excitement; nor had she tardily discovered that some dreadful crisis was at hand; though what that crisis was, not having been a party to the councils of the regal circle on the previous night, she

might not even guess. The thoughtless words, however, of the light-minded Henrietta had given her at once the clew, which her quick apprehension followed, as it were, intuitively through all its labyrinth; and she at once availed herself of the discovery she had made with a degree of cool and present courage, that, even in that age of prompt and daring action, failed not to wake the admiration which it merited.

Now, however, when the hardening excitement had passed over, when the nerves, which had been strung so tensely to the performance of her duty, were no longer kept in play, when she knew that her trusty messenger was on his way, and past the palace gates already, bearing the tidings of approaching insult, outrage, and peril, to the liberties of England's parliament, the majesty of England's laws, she for the first time trembled, not for herself, but for her country. She, for the first time, began to fear that she might be too late, and that the blow might have already fallen, ere her warning should arouse the destined victims to perception of their danger. Her face was paler than its wont, and her blue eye, so tranquil in its usual expression, was slightly anxious. Yet it was but a little while that her uncertainty continued; for, ere an hour had elapsed, the queen, whose passions became more and more enkindled with every moment of suspense, sending another messenger to learn whether the houses were in session still, received for answer that they had just adjourned until one of the clock, and that the members even now were passing to their lodgings.

"Heavens!" cried Henrietta, almost in despair at this unpleasing and most unexpected news—"Just Heavens! can it be that he hath failed me!" and casting herself down at length upon a couch, covered her head with a thick veil, and waited, in an agonized and speechless fit of mingled hope and terror, the result of her intriguing machinations.

In the meantime the house, which had assembled at the usual hour, not altogether unexpectant of some farther outrage on its privileges, had indeed, on receiving the well-timed announcement from the Countess of Carlisle, upon the instant voted an adjournment, that it might bet-

ter concert plans of resistance to that lawless violence which it was now too well assured the sovereign had resolved to perpetrate. It was at this moment, when all were hastening homeward, that Arden observed Cromwell hurrying to and fro among the leading favorers both of the popular and Puritanic principles, and whispering to one a word or two, then passing to another; and, as he gazed upon his compressed lip, and eye flashing with almost savage pleasure, he felt, even more strongly than at any prior moment, the conviction that this wily person was indeed engaged more intimately in directing the important springs of party action, than could have been supposed from the inferior part which he was wont to play in its ostensible and open movements. He knew not at the time, any more than four-fifths of the house, what were the secret news which had so suddenly produced adjournment; and had, indeed, himself voted against a measure which he could not comprehend, although the private hints of Oliver and Hampden had not escaped his notice; nor could he now conceive the meaning of the strong excitement which kindled all who listened to the words of Cromwell, as it were, with an electric spark. Not long, however, was he destined to remain in ignorance; for, with his harsh features even more than commonly inflamed and ruddy, the Puritan approached him.

"Ha!" he said, in a loud, sharp whisper—"Ha! Master Arden; how is this, that you, to whom we confidently looked for succor, should, in this strait and peril, have turned against us, consorting with the men of Belial?"

"I know not, Master Cromwell," Arden replied — "I know not, in good truth, to what you allude; nor have I heard of any strait or peril. I saw, indeed, that you and Master Hampden were desirous I should vote for this adjournment; but seeing no cause wherefore, nor being, so far as I knew it, your follower or pledged supporter, assuredly I deemed it best for mine own honor to abide by the poor dictates of mine own opinion."

"Call it you then no strait," asked Oliver, with a dark sneer upon his lip, "no strait nor peril, that Charles Stuart should dare come hither with his accursed cavaliers,

with his lewd yeomen and rakehelly pensioners, seeking out whom they may devour, having their swords new-whetted, and their hearts a-fire, to shed the blood of the saints; should dare come hither, hither, within these privileged, time-honored walls, to lay his violent, tyrannical hands on those with whose salt only we are savored?"

"What mean you, sir? speak out!" cried Arden. "Will he indeed do this? Can he be so infatuated — so insane?"

"*Will* Charles Stuart dare it?" said the other; "say rather what he will *not* dare, if we, the watchers and the guardians sitting on the tower, yea! on the house-top, to give note of coming woe, blow not the trumpet through the land. Yea! will he come, and that right shortly! yea! will he come, and if our hearts be not the stronger, and our arms too, if need there be, will trample down the liberties of England unto everlasting!"

"Never! no, never!" exclaimed Edgar, vehemently moved — "No, never shall he do so! never while I, if none beside, have sword to wield, and hand with which to wield it."

"Ay! is it so?" returned the other, his whole face blazing out with a triumphant ecstacy — Ay! is it so? and would you draw the carnal sword, if it were needed?"

"Would I?" cried Arden, "would I unsheath the sword to guard these holy walls from desecration? Would I uplift my arm against the hireling ministers of lawless and despotic violence?—ay, were those ministers ten thousand sworded spirits!"

"Then fare thee well," cried Oliver, "then fare thee well, and hold fast to thy good resolve, while I go wake the rest to a like sense; above all, be thou in thy place when we again assemble, and then call thou me fool and liar, an' thou see not great things!"

The interval passed speedily away, consumed in wise and seemly preparation. Notice was dispatched to the lord mayor and corporation of the threatened danger; the citizens were all admonished to stand upon their guard; and members were sent down to the Temple and the Inns

of Court to warn the students that the house was well aware how they had been already tampered with; and to command they should not come, on any plea, to Westminster; and, ere the time appointed, the house was crowded. Edgar was in his place among the first; and as he saw the five obnoxious members calmly resume their seats, as though no peril threatened them, a mingled sentiment of admiration and regret thrilled to his heart at the idea, that, if indeed the king, with his wild, dissolute attendants, should forcibly attempt to seize them, they surely would resist, and but too probably be slaughtered on the very spot which they had made to ring so often with their proud, patriotic eloquence.

As he thus thought, a new impression shot with the speed of light into his mind—"If they be absent—if they be absent when he come — the fearful consequences may be perchance averted, which otherwise must, beyond doubt, result from letting loose a band of reckless soldiery to rush in, sword in hand, on gentlemen armed likewise, and almost unanimous to guard their liberties with life." And on the instant he arose, and in a few words, powerful and manly, moved that the house should grant permission to those members to withdraw themselves, lest tumult, and perhaps even worse than tumult, fall of it. "I second it," cried Cromwell, starting to his feet— "I second the honorable member's motion. Let them withdraw them straightway to the city until this tyranny be overpast."

Without a single voice or vote dissentient, the question then was carried; and the house gave permission that they might retire; and, at solicitation from their friends, they instantly departed. Scarce had the hurry and confusion consequent on their withdrawal ceased, ere a dull, trampling noise was heard without, as of a powerful band of men; a word to halt was given, and for a while the sound was hushed, the members sitting stern and silent in their places, disdaining to show any sign either of wrath or terror. Again the sounds were heard ascending the great staircase; and now the clink of steel, as the broad blades of partisan or halbert clashed together—and now a shout, "Fall on! fall on!" mixed

with the shuffling tramp of feet, the jingling of scabbards, and all the bustle that accompanies a sudden and disordered march. Nearer and nearer came the tumult; the lobby was already filled, to judge from the increasing clatter, with armed intruders; and now the din of grounded arms rang audibly upon the ears of the undaunted counsellors. Then for the first time was a show of passion manifested among the younger gentlemen; a dozen, at the least, impetuously started to their feet, and not a few grasped, with an energy that proved how fearlessly they would have used them, the hilts of the long rapiers which all of gentle birth at that time carried.

A single word, however, from the speaker of the house, a single cry of order, sufficed to bring them peacefully into their places. But there they sat, with eyes that actually lightened with strong indignation, and with that fiery aspect of the gladiator, which marked how rapturously they would have plunged into the fiercest conflict. At this instant was the door thrown open, and a messenger sent in, who reverentially enough informed the house that the king was at the door, and that the speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying on the board before him. Still not one word was spoken; not a whisper, not a breath, nor murmur, was heard through that spacious hall; and every man sat fast, with head unmoved, and eyes fixed sternly, straight before him; as if they did not so much as vouchsafe to cast a glance, still less a thought, toward the violator of their rights. Had there been aught of riot or confusion, had there been aught of armed and passionate resistance, nay, had there been any fear, or doubt, or wavering, it then had been an easier task for the misguided king to carry out his frantic and destructive purpose. But hard it is, and most revolting to all human feelings, to outrage and assault where there is neither terror nor resistance. It was perhaps a minute after the messenger retired, before anything new disturbed the silence that prevailed unbroken beneath the vaulted roof, a minute, fraught with the thronged sensations of unnumbered years, a minute, that seemed longer than a life to every patriot seated there, as gravely steadfast as those senators of early Rome, who waited in their

robes of dignity, and on their curule chairs, the moment when the Gallic horde should pour out on their white, unshrinking heads the cups of massacre and vengeance.

Then came a quick, irregular tread, that readily betokened, by its uncertain time, the irresolution and anxiety that were at work within the breast of him who was approaching. "Enter not, any of ye, on your lives!" was uttered in the harsh voice of the king, before his person came in view—an order understood by all who heard, as it was doubtless meant by him who uttered it, to be words, empty words, and spoken for effect. Then, leaning on the shoulder of the palsgrave, Charles Stuart advanced. Those who stood nearest to his person might have seen a momentary pause, a brief, involuntary hesitation, a reluctance, hardly, perhaps, acknowledged to himself, to cross what was to be the Rubicon of all his future fortunes; but so short was the pause, so small the effort it required to conquer that reluctance, that it would seem indeed as if—according to the classic proverb—destined already to destruction, he were deserted by his sanity of intellect. Perhaps he had expected fear — abject and tame submission — had supposed that he should stride in triumph, unopposed, and sued to on the bended knee, through that magnificent assemblage. Perhaps he had expected anger, indignation, and defiance. But now, as he looked up those lines of crowded benches, and met no glance of recognition, encountered no full front either of wrath or scorn, but caught alone, row behind row, those stern and masculine profiles, composed, severe, and passionless — profiles, averted less in resentment than in proud, contemptuous sorrow — his wayward spirit for a moment's space recoiled, and he half wished the perilous step untaken.

It was but for the twinkling of an eye, however, that his rash mood of obstinacy failed him; for, without a quiver of his nerves, a change of his dark features, he strode across the threshold, about a pace before his foreign kinsman. The Earl of Roxborough, a tall and powerful man, armed, somewhat more than commonly, with a long military sword and heavy poniard at his belt, had followed close upon his master's footsteps, until he also

stood upon the threshold; he crossed it not, however, but stood there, leaning with his whole weight against the door, which opened outwardly, so that it would have been impossible for any from within the house to close it, his right hand resting, as if carelessly, upon the pommel of his war-sword, and his left twirling, with a gesture of unbridled insolence, his long mustache; while many a fierce, licentious countenance might be seen glaring from behind him on the conservators of their country's freedom with a wild and wolfish aspect of malignant hatred. The king himself, attired as usual in a plain garb of sable velvet, wearing no weapon but an ordinary walking-sword, and carrying in his right hand, together with his staff, the dark-plumed beaver which he had doffed on entering, stalked coolly up the house, the palsgrave following slowly, and, as it seemed, with a half timid and reluctant step. Still all was silence—silence so profound, that, save the heavy footsteps of the monarch, not a sound could be perceived, unless it were when from without some weapon-clang was heard, or some rude threat or grisly imprecation was muttered in the ante-chamber by the desperate attendants of a Lunsford or a Digby. The face of Charles, grave and even sorrowful by nature, was something paler than its wont; but with that sort of paleness which conveys no thought of cowardice or trembling, but of resolve, immovable and icy. His mouth was firmly closed, but not compressed, nor showing aught of effort. His eye, calm, searching, cold, but keen and hard as iron! His nostrils only of his features gave token of emotion, or of any feeling hotter than determination; for it was dilated, wide, and slightly quivering. Yet was his hand steady as the columns which upheld the roof above him, and his stride, now that he stood among his lieges, however it had been irregular and hasty ere he entered, was measured, long, and equal.

As he advanced along the floor, he turned his head from side to side, perusing, with deliberate and steady glance, the lineaments of every member whom he passed; and if when at a distance not one eye had sought him, so when he now stood close beside them, not one eye avoided him. Each, as Charles came into his line of direct

vision, met his hard gaze with an unblenching and unloving brow; for not one man, even of those the most devoted to his will, of those who *would* have served him at that moment, who afterward *did* serve him with their whole hearts and lives, but was disgusted, angered, full of deep sorrow, almost of despair. Little there was, however, of the stronger and more stormy passions painted upon the brows of those who sat thus fearlessly, braving the temper of a king whose wrath was no less lasting and vindictive than it was hot and sudden. The expression that prevailed most largely was of mingled aspect, half pity, half defiance. But when the tyrant — for that action, if that only, justified the title—approached the seat of Cromwell, perhaps at that day scarcely known by name to the proud sovereign, and his glance fell upon those grim, ungainly features, then Arden witnessed — for his eye was still attracted, why he knew not, with a strange sense of fascination toward the Puritan—then Arden witnessed that which in after times he often called to mind, and never without awe and wonder, a dark conflict—for such it might indeed be termed—a conflict of eye, countenance, and bearing, between those men so eminently thrown together, and blended in their spheres of good or evil action.

The glance of Charles, when first it fell upon the coarse and most unpleasing lineaments of Oliver, was instantly averted; but averted merely as men ever turn the eye away from objects naturally distasteful and unseemly. At that point of time the face of Cromwell was as tranquil, as immovable, as that of his great future rival; but the tranquillity was as different, as is the stillness of a hushed volcano and the peaceful calm of heaven. The swollen and corded veins upon the temple, the eyebrows lowered and contorted, the balls gleaming beneath them with a fixed and baleful light, the nostril rigidly distended, and the lips pressed so tightly that they alone of his whole aspect were of a livid whiteness. Ere Edgar had the time to think, had there been any matter yet for thought, the eye of Charles stole back, half timidly as it appeared, toward that tiger-like and glaring face. Then, as it met the sinister and ominous stare of fierce defiance, it brightened also,

vivid, and keen, and with a falcon-like and noble splendor. For some short space they gazed, those two undisciplined and haughty spirits, into each other's very souls, mutually, as it seemed, conscious at a glance of irremediable and desperate hostility. The king's look, quiet, although high and angry, and most unutterably proud. Cromwell's, sarcastic, bitter, furious, and determined, and withal so savagely triumphant, so mirthful in its dire malignity, that Arden thought he never had beheld a countenance so fiendishly expressive. And Charles Stuart's aspect, after a fixed encounter of ten seconds' space, Charles Stuart's haughty aspect quailed beneath it; and, as he passed along — for the whole occurred in less time than were needful to recite it — he gazed no more around him, but went directly onward, looking gloomily, upon the ground, toward the speaker's chair.

But the stern democrat, as if conscious that his genius had prevailed, cast his eyes round him with an air of loftier and more sublimated feeling than Edgar had as yet observed him wear. It was a trifle at the period when it passed, and none but he noticed or recorded it; but after times and after deeds stamped it, no more to be erased, upon the tablets of his inmost soul. Meanwhile the king had reached the chair; and Lenthall, the bold speaker, who had hitherto sat still, as proud and far more placid than his visitor, arose, and stepped out stately and cold to meet him. Then the king mounted to his place, and stood upon the step, but spake not, nor sat down; and there he stood, gloomily gazing on the house, with a dark look of sullen anger, for many minutes; and after he had looked a great while, "Gentlemen," he said, in a high voice, clearly audible, though neither musical nor pleasing, to the most distant corner,

"Gentlemen of the Commons, I am sorry for this my cause of coming to you. Yesterday I did send a sergeant to demand some, who, by my order, were accused of treason. Instead of prompt obedience, I received — a message!" and he uttered the last word with the most concentrated scorn and insolence! "I must, then, here declare to you, that though no king that ever was in England could be more careful of your privileges than I have

been — and shall be — yet, I can tell you, treason hath no privilege! and therefore am I come to tell you that I *must* have these men, and *will*, wherever I may find them!" And, as he spoke, he looked around the hall with a deliberate air, scanning the faces of all present, if he might find his men; then, raising his voice higher yet, he called aloud, till the roof rang again — "Ho! I say, Master Hollis!—Master Pym!" No answer was returned, nor any sound; save an increased and angry tumult in the lobby, with a brandishing of partisans and a producing of concealed but ready pistols, so that some members thought to see the soldiers instantly rush into the chamber. After a little pause, finding he got no answer, he turned to the speaker — "Say," he exclaimed — "say, Mr. Speaker, be any of these men here present?" For a moment Lenthall paused, as doubting whether to hurl his own defiance and that of the assembled commons into his very teeth; but, ere the echoes of the monarch's voice had ceased, he had resolved upon the wiser and more prudent part, and bending, with most deferential courtesy, his knee — "I have, sir," he replied, "neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, save as this house, whose servant I am sworn, shall order me. And therefore must I pray your majesty to pardon me that I return no farther answer!"

"Ha! sir," returned Charles, sharply, and with incipient fury; but a moment's thought convinced him that the humble answer of the speaker defied at once and rendered hopeless any charge or violence against him. "Ha! sir," again he said, but in a milder tone, "I do believe my eyes are to the full as good as yours, and I do see my birds are flown; but this I tell you, and so look ye to it — I hold this house to send them to me! Failing of which, I shall myself go seek them! For, sirs, their treason is most foul, and such as you shall thank me, all of you, now to discover. And I assure you, on a king's word I assure you, I never did mean any violence, and they shall have fair trial; I meant not any other!" He waited not for farther words; perchance he doubted what reply he might receive to this last *false* asseveration, palpably, unquestionably false; for wherefore brought he his disbanded soldiery, his rude and ruffian bravoes, with rapier, parti-

san, and pistol, into the very precincts of the house? Wherefore, unless he had designed to hale the accused members violently forth by the strong arm of tyrannous authority?

Stepping down from the chair, he walked, uncovered still, but at a quicker pace than that with which he entered, toward the lobby; but now, as he departed, his looks were not turned haughtily from side to side, but sadly bent upon the floor; nor was his passage silent as before—for member after member started up as Charles went past him, with bent brow and clinched hand; and groans both loud and deep saluted him. As he came nigh the seat of Cromwell, the king raised his visage, haggard now and pale, as if with an anxious curiosity to look upon the man before whose eye he felt himself to have recoiled; and, as he met it, Oliver sprang upon his feet, his long tuck rattling in the scabbard as he rose, and, stamping on the floor with fury, shouted aloud, in tones not mild nor measured, the word "Privilege!" A dozen voices took it up, though not so loudly nor with so marked defiance as the first daring speaker, and the whole house was in the wildest and most uncontrolled confusion.

Delightedly would the despotic prince, had he but dared it, at that moment have cried ON! have given the *word*, expected by his myrmidons, for massacre and havoc, have bid the swords, which were already thirsting in their scabbards, leap forth and drink their fill of that most noble blood of England.

But, thanks to Heaven, he dared not! There would have been no object worthy of the risk; no gain to justify the detestation he would have so heaped upon his head! He did not *dare;* and therefore, smothering for the time his virulent and vengeful fury, he departed. The door rang heavily behind him; and with no muttered curses on the head of him who lacked the spirit to perform what he and they yearned equally to execute, frustrate of their desired vengeance, unsatisfied and balked, his hireling desperadoes filed out from the venerable walls their presence had so shamefully polluted.

CHAPTER XI.

A FUGITIVE KING.

"He hath gone forth!
Not with the gorgeous majesty sublime
Of marshalled hosts, nor with the brazen din
Of trumps sonorous, but heart-sick and sad,
Despairing and dishonored! He hath gone,
Gone, that his place shall never know him more,
Cursed of his people, outcast from his throne,
A dim, discrowned king!"

The night fell dark, ominous of the times, and tempestuous withal. The winds wailed mournfully at intervals, at intervals shrieked out with savage fury; and as the giant clouds were driven reelingly across the firmament, blotting the faint light of the winking stars, fierce bursts of hail and rain came dashing to the earth, and ceased as suddenly as they commenced. And ever and anon the thunder growled remotely, but with a sullen rolling that seemed almost continuous, such was the length and frequency of the strong peals; and lightnings flashed on every side of heaven, now in broad, quivering sheets of ghastly light, that transiently displayed the ragged edges of each fleeting storm-cloud in distinct relief, and now in wavy lines of most intense and vivid fire, rushing athwart the wrack from zenith to horizon. Yet, turbulent as was the night above the city, and ominous as showed the gathering of the elements, still more alarming was the turbulence that reigned in the full streets, and more portentous the concourse of the armed and angry citizens. The train-bands had been mustered in the early evening, with harquebus and pike, their lighted matches gleaming on all sides through the murky darkness, and the heavy trampling of their companions everywhere audible, as they marched to and fro, vainly desirous to allay the tumult which had arisen instantly on the arrival of the accused members, seeking protection in the guarded precincts of the city. From sunset until dawn the mayor

patrolled the streets with his assistant magistrates, vainly endeavoring to quell the terrified and savage populace, with whom each court and alley, from the purlieus of Alsatia quite to the Tower, was blockaded and beset, all armed as chance had ordered it, some with the perfect implements of modern warfare, others with weapons obsolete and strange, brown-bills, and glaives, and maces.

Chains were made fast athwart the most frequented avenues; and barricades of stone and timber, heaped rudely but effectively together, above which yawned the mouth of many a ponderous cannon, would have presented no small obstacles to any who should dare invade the sacred limits of the city. Huge bonfires blazed in every quarter, torches and flambeaux streamed and wavered in each gust of wind, casting a singular and ruddy glare upon the pallid faces and unusual weapons of the unwashed artisans who formed the bulk of the assemblage; though they were mingled here and there with grave and well-attired burghers, their morions and gorgets wildly at variance with their civic garbs and golden chains, with young and ruffling templars, to whom aught savoring frolic or of fight was most congenial, and with sad-visaged and morose soldadoes, in suits of buff, tarnished and soiled by service, girded with broad-swords of unwieldy length, fresh from the German wars or the Low Countries, then, as in every age, the battle field of Europe—all keeping up, throughout the livelong night, a dissonance of tongues as loud and jarring as ever rent the air around the heaven-defying Babel.

At times a sudden panic would run through the crowd, none knowing whom to trust or whom to flee, a cry would ring above the mingled din—"The cavaliers! The cavaliers! Fly! Fly! The king and his wild cavaliers are up to fire the city!" and, without waiting to inquire or to hear, the mob would rush they knew not whither, trampling the aged and the feeble under foot, and turning oftentimes the very weapons they had belted on to guard their liberties against each other in the blind and reeling rout. And now, with words of fire and gestures of defiance, some bolder spirit would brave the panic-stricken

throng, and rally it and lead it back, with brandished arms and inflamed features, to meet the foemen who existed only in their imaginations, maddened with terror and excitement.

Nor was the panic and confusion slighter within the royal palace. Between the hapless king and his perfidious consort, distrust, recrimination, wrath, followed by feigned repentance on the one hand, uxorious pardon on the other. Among the counsellors, dismay and doubt, high words, and mutual reproaches, and all the vehement disorder that ensues on the adoption and discomfiture of evil counsels. Digby and Lunsford wearied Charles, faint-hearted now and dubious, for permission to assail the city gates, and drag the impeached traitors forth from their stronghold at point of partisan and pike. Others deplored the rash steps already taken, and protested against farther violence. And some, the nobler and more upright spirits, Falkland and Hyde, and their associates, held themselves aloof in deep, resentful sorrow, that all their wisdom had been wasted, and themselves distrusted and deceived.

Never a longer night was followed by a sadder morning; for, although daylight calmed the terror and the tumult, it allayed nothing of the concentrated wrath, diminished nothing of the jealous apprehensions entertained by either party. After a short debate, the parliament, both lords and commons, adjourned for several days, appointing a committee to sit constantly, mornings and afternoons, at Merchants' Hall, within the city walls, where they might be secure from farther outrage, and free to devise means for vindication of their members, and safeguard of their violated rights. Edgar, informed of the commotions, and anxious for the safety of the city, called for his horse the moment after the adjournment, and, with some six or seven followers, well mounted and equipped, rode up the Strand—a scattered street at that day, occupied by the suburban dwellings of the rich and noble, with terraced gardens sloping downward to the Thames—full of calm resolution, and intending instantly to volunteer his aid for putting down the riots, and establishing some governance of law. When he reached Tem-

ple-Bar the gates were closed with bolt and chain, a powerful band of musketeers, with gun and bandoleers, manning its loops, and mustering at every window that overlooked the area before it.

But, at announcement of his quality and name, the bolts were drawn, the heavy leaves unfolded, and he entered amid presented arms and muttered greetings of the sentinels. With a pleased eye he saw at once that order was restored; suspicion still prevailed, and vigilance, but tumult and confusion had given way to wise and watchful regulation. The shops were shut, and business was suspended, it is true, and all men who went forth wore weapons; but the train-bands patrolled the streets, with magistrates at the head of every company, no less to enforce internal quiet than to resist external force. Scarce had he ridden twenty yards within the gate ere a fresh summons roused the wardens, and a king's messenger, after some parley, was admitted, and conducted by a file of infantry to hearing of the aldermen, then sitting at the Guildhall. The business on which Arden came directing him to the same quarter, and strong anxiety to learn the future movements of the court still farther prompting him, he at once wheeled to the rear of this small band, and, passing onward with them, was ushered in without delay to the mayor's presence, and, in consideration of his place in parliament, accommodated with a seat whence he might witness the proceedings of the day, and lend his counsel, if need were, to these, the magnates of the city. To his astonishment, as to that, indeed, of all, the messenger announced that his majesty was already entering his coach to wait upon the mayor, when he had left Whitehall; and that he prayed that dignitary to call a common council on the instant. Sir Richard Gourney, the then holder of that office, although inclined not slightly to the principles of the decided royalists, disclaiming, as did all the wiser of the party, any participation in, or knowledge of, a course which, now that it had failed, they all professed to disapprove, was careful to display no symptom of subserviency. Perhaps, indeed, he truly felt that wrong had been committed, and was sincere, as he was evidently faithful to his trust, in

the determination to maintain inviolate the privileges of which he was the guardian. The council was at the time in session, and scarcely had the messenger withdrawn before the king arrived, not with the armed and dissolute attendants who had convoyed him to the halls of parliament, but with some two or three lords only, and those of the most moderate among his partisans. The shouts that ran like wild-fire along the crowded streets, mingled with groans and yells, the cries, "Privilege! Privilege of parliament!" announced his presence at the doors of the Guildhall before he had alighted from his coach, and clearly proved the temper of the now thoroughly aroused and fearless multitude. While, as a token of the perfect mastery of the law even at that moment of tremendous and well-nigh unparalleled excitement, a daring pamphlet-writer, who had thrown into the monarch's coach a paper, bearing inscribed the scriptural watchword, "To your tents, O Israel!" was instantly committed for contempt. The city dignitaries rose indeed from their seats on the king's entrance; they tendered to him all, all, to the most minute particulars, that was his due of reverance and ceremonial greeting; but there was no heart-inspired applause, no loyal spirit-stirring cry, "God save the king!" no smile, no welcome! Strange it may seem, yet he had hoped, indeed, infatuated man, that he should now succeed in gaining the authorities to yield their honored guests to his demand; and so commenced what he esteemed a mild, conciliatory harangue, requiring their surrender, full of false statements of his veneration and regard, in all past time, for England's laws and liberties, of his affection for the Protestant religion, of his enforcement of the penal statutes against the dreaded Papists, and no less full of promises, unmeaning, insincere, and empty, concerning his intentions for the future.

A little applause and no obedience followed! Baffled a second time, and yet more deeply mortified, he left the Guildhall; but, desirous still of pleasing, and imagining, short-sighted and deluded prince, that, by a slender show of condescension, he could efface the recollection of so many arbitrary acts against the corporate and individual

interests of the city, he vouchsafed to one, the worse affected toward his person, of the sheriffs, the honor of dining at his house. He was served, together with his retinue, with more than courtly luxury, with all respect and honor, paid, not to himself, but to the station which he so ill occupied, but with no semblance of that glad alacrity, that honest and ungrudging heart-service, which is well worth a world of bended knees and hollow ceremonial. Late in the evening, harassed in spirit and fatigued in body, irritated by the reproachful hootings of the multitude that jarred, at every instant of his homeward progress, on his reluctant ear, and hopeless now of compassing his tyrannical ends, he retired to his palace, there to give impotent and childish vent to his indignant spleen, by publishing a proclamation against all men, who should presume to harbor or conceal the persons whom he had previously denounced as traitors.

Days passed away; each marked by some bold resolution of the commons, by increased tokens of the deep respect and admiration entertained by the great bulk of the metropolis toward the vindicators of its rights, and by some weak and useless aggravation of his former measures on the part of the misguided and wife-governed monarch. A week had scantly rolled above their heads, before the house, conscious of its own strength, and knowing the entire impotence of the king's party, determined to bring back their members to Westminister, as being men against whom no legitimate or constitutional charge was pending; and preparation of unwonted splendor and extent was made for reconducting them in triumph to their seats.

The news might not escape the ears of Charles, bruited as it was all joyously abroad through every class of persons, and pleasing as it was to nearly all; for not a few, even of those who heretofore had backed him with their voices and opinions in all his troubles, and who in after days as faithfully assisted him with life and fortune, were not entirely sorry for the occurrence of a marked reverse, which might, they fondly hoped, avail to check him in his inordinate and reckless cravings, cravings which, to their own eyes, they could not now disguise or palliate, for

power, unconstitutional at least, if not tyrannical and absolute. Bitter, most bitter, were his feelings, as he went, ungreeted by one loyal acclamation, his absence unlamented by one loyal tear, forth from the palace of his fathers, almost alone in actual fact, but absolutely so in sentiment; the queen, for whose sake mainly he had embroiled himself with his true-hearted subjects, ungratefully and spitefully upbraiding him, not for the folly of his measures, but for his failure in their execution; his courtiers, who had urged him on to every fresh aggression, and lauded every new caprice, now silent and dejected; and the very guards who rode before his coach dispirited and crest-fallen.

Bitter, most bitter, were his feelings; but it was not with the bitterness of manly and upright repentance; not with the bitterness upspringing from the sense of wrong committed, and resulting in a promise of amendment; but with the bitterness of discontent and disappointment, of unholy wishes frustrated, and merited reverses sullenly remembered. Such were the feelings of that bad monarch and unhappy man as he drove forth, that so he might avoid the triumph of his disaffected subjects, after the shades of early evening had already gathered dark and cold about the misty streets, toward Hampton Court, virtually exiled from the metropolis of his oppressed and groaning country, and from the jeoparded, dishonored throne of his forefathers, as he was, forever, from the hearts of his once loving subjects.

But the sun rose upon a nobler and more glorious spectacle, a spectacle rife with great blessings for the present, and brilliant omens for the future, the spectacle of a vast people, free and united, victorious, not by the sword, nor over slain and mutilated carcasses, but by the strength of popular opinion, founded on the broad base of justice, animated by the deathless love of liberty, and directed by such a knot of patriots as England in no other age had witnessed. On came the fair procession, marshalled by loud, triumphant music, and the yet louder shouts of honest and exulting myriads; gay with a thousand flags and banners flaunting to the wintry sun, which wore, on that proud morning, his brightest and most gorgeous aspect;

guarded by all the sober strength of civil discipline, and all the orderly and bright array of the well-trained militia of the city; not fluttering, indeed, with tasselled scarfs or many-colored plumes, but well equipped with morions of steel, polished till they shone out like silver, and stout buff-coats, all service-like and uniform, with their puissant pikes thick as a grove of pines, their broad heads glinting back the sunbeams, and harquebusses clearly burnished as when they left the armory. Fifty in front they marched, in close and serried order, striding along with regular and sturdy steps, rank after rank, each as a single man, with that erect, undaunted bearing which belongs only to the free; and with the tranquil eye and calm though proud expression which mark the disciplined, law-loving citizen, and not the fierce, unruly democrat. The companies were all arrayed beneath the civic banners of their respective wards, and headed by their captains, mounted well on strong and serviceable chargers, and gallantly equipped in scarlet cassocks and steel corslets. Behind this stately host, preceded by the bearers of his mace and sword, and all the glittering insignia of city pomp, Sir Richard Gourney rode along, curbing a splendid courser, whose footcloth, blazoned with rich armorial bearings, almost swept the ground, sorely, as it would seem, against his will, to slow procession pace. Then, two and two, in flowing robes of scarlet, with chains of gold about their necks, and tall white feathers floating above their velvet bonnets, the sheriffs and the aldermen advanced; and then, received by acclamations that were heard for many a mile around, clad in their ordinary garbs, and wearing in their grave demeanor no tokens of undue importance or unfitting exultation, the denounced patriots rode steadily along; and, headed by their speaker, the whole house of commons followed. No banners waved above them, no gorgeous dresses pointed them for public admiration, no high assumption called the eye to them, yet as they swept slowly forward, a band of gentlemen, mostly of noble, *all* of reputable birth, chosen for worth and wisdom to be the delegates of a great people, of a people the most manly, and intelligent, and free of the wide universe, they could not but have attracted the eye and fixed the untaught admi-

ration of the most stolid or most slavish; what then must they have done when they were passing before those whose liberties they had asserted at the risk of all that men hold dear?

Close trooping in the rear of these another strong battalion of the train-bands marched, several brigades of field artillery, huge, cumbrous iron guns, with tumbrils following and matches lighted, rattled and groaned over the rugged pavements, and a long train of well-appointed horse of each denomination then in use, the heavy cuirassiers, with helmets, breast and back pieces, poldrons and taslets of bright polished steel, bearing long two-edged broad-swords, and pistolets with barrels full two feet in length, mounted harquebusiers, with short but ponderous matchlocks and formidable rapiers; lancers, with no defensive arms save morion and gorget, and no weapons save their spears of fifteen feet and light curved sabres, in imitation of the Polish horse, already celebrated in the German wars, a splendid cavalcade, brought up the rear. While thousands and tens of thousands, strong men and tottering children, matrons and hoary-headed sires, and maidens delicate and tender, the vast population of the city and its suburbs poured out to meet their champions, hindering their progress by their living masses, and clinging even to the horses they bestrode, with fervent prayers and blessings, and with tears of holy joy, and waving kerchiefs, and exulting shouts, to greet the people's friends; and with wild curses on the king and on his cavaliers, concerning whom they oft and sneeringly inquired, "Where be they now, and whither have they fled?"

Meanwhile adown the Thames another pomp was floating, toward the stairs at Westminster, second, if second, only to the landward show. Hundreds of lighters, pinnaces, and long-boats, all were dressed with waistcloths and with streamers, laden with musketry and ordnance, manned by a host of British mariners, whose meteor flag even then "had braved, a thousand years, the battle and the breeze," furrowed the broad and placid river; while ever and anon the salvos of their cannon, thundering above the din and clamors of the mighty concourse, announced to the disheartened monarch, even in his sad retreat at

Hampton, the failure of his insolent aggression, and the triumphant testimony borne by his indignant subjects to the untiring efforts and undaunted resolution of those noble spirits, whom his oppressive madness had converted, step by step, from the most steady guardians to the most constant foemen of his person and his crown.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

BOOK II.

They have drawn to the field
Two royal armies, full of fiery youth;
Of equal spirit to dare, and power to do:
So near intrenched, that 'tis beyond all hope
Of human counsel they can e'er be severed,
Until it be determined by the sword
Who hath the better cause; for the success
Concludes the victor innocent, and the vanquished
Most miserably guilty.

MASSINGER—*The Duke of Milan.*

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

A PURITAN HORSE REGIMENT.

> The land we from our fathers had in trust,
> And to our children will transmit or die;
> This is our maxim, this our piety;
> And God and nature say that it is just.
> That which we would perform in arms, we must.
>
> WORDSWORTH.—*Sonnets to Liberty.*

A YEAR had passed since Arden's landing on his native shores, unfixed of purpose, and, above all, an advocate for peace, a year in which events had taken place that rendered hopeless all accommodation between the hostile parties, until one should have been proved decidedly superior. The very day on which the king had fled from London, lest he should witness the return of the five members to the house, having been signalized by a most wild and ill-digested movement of the fiery Lunsford, sufficiently disclosed the intentions of the royalists in an attempt to seize a magazine of arms at Kingston.

Then came the treachery of Goring; the king's fruitless effort against Hull; the calling out of the militia; the arming on both sides; and all the small guerrilla skirmishes that were occurring daily for some months previous to the nominal commencement of the war.

The queen, who had escaped to Holland, stealing and bearing with her the crown jewels, which were pawned at once to furnish arms, and men, and money, was setting every spring in motion on the continent. Rupert and Maurice had arrived in England, and the former was, on his first interview, appointed general of the cavalry. The royal standard had been raised, some two months past, at Nottingham, with evil omens, and under auspices the most unfavorable, a mighty tempest having poured its

fury on the gathering of the troops, dispirited and few in number, and unfurnished with the most evident and indispensable equipments of an army, weapons, and clothes, and ammunition. The flag itself, displaying, in addition to the wonted quarterings of England, a small escutcheon, charged with the royal bearings and the crown, and compassed by a scroll, with the scriptural motto, "Render his due to Cesar!" was scarcely elevated ere a heavier gust of wind, accompanied with floods of rain and a fierce crash of thunder, shivered the staff in twain, and dashed the ensign violently to the ground; while such was the increasing fury of the tempest that two whole days elapsed before it could be reared again. Still, although by this overt act the king had most unquestionably issued his appeal to the sword as to the sole remaining arbiter, matters went on but heartlessly and slowly.

Each side, averse to throw away the scabbard, paused in grim and terrible suspense, irreconcilably hostile to the other, yet unwilling to incur the blame of being first to strike, or foremost to refuse accommodation. The royal forces, far too weak to court the brunt of battle, aimlessly marched and countermarched, levying contributions in this place, and mustering volunteers in that; while the superior party of the parliament, already strong enough to have surprised and crushed the royalists at a single blow, lay in their quarters, waiting, as it would seem, till they should muster resolution to commence hostilities. The truth, which has been strangely overlooked by all historians of these turbulent and most important times, was simply this; that, in the outset of that fearful strife, there was but little difference between the views, and hopes, and fears of the most eminent and upright men of either party. How it should ever have been fancied, much less gravely argued, that the great body of the English gentry and nobility were anxious to subvert the constitution, which had been freed from the arbitrary power of the Norman princes by the sole efforts of their order, and to erect an absolute and unchecked despotism, which must have necessarily ruined their own caste, it is most difficult, indeed, to comprehend or to conjecture. Nor is it less absurd to hold that the more liberal peers, who, neither

few in number nor deficient in sagacity, were enlisted on the people's side, were in the least degree prepared to overthrow that ancient monarchy from which they all derived their greatness, and to descend at once from their exalted grade to mere equality with their less elevated countrymen.

In simple fact, the leading men of either party dreaded defeat or victory with a nearly equal apprehension; knowing that such an overthrow befalling either host, as should conclude the other absolutely masters of the game, would be most hopelessly destructive to the liberties of England. It was then in this spirit that the counsellors of Charles, scarcely more fearful of reverses which should deliver them a prey to their stern foemen, than of success which would inflame and aggravate the monarch's native haughtiness, labored, with all their powers, to bring about some reconciliation; but in vain, their every effort being frustrated by the imbecile insincerity and double-dealing of their principal. At length, when the last hopes were quenched of peace unbought by victory, the fiery Rupert, who, from the first had been the open advocate of instant battle, acting with indefatigable and almost sleepless energy, collected horses, men, and cannon from the northern and the midland counties, until the royal army amounted to the number of ten thousand — three foot brigades under Sir Jacob Astley, and the Earl of Lindsey, an officer experienced in the wars of the Low Countries, three dragoon regiments, to act as horse or infantry as need might be, under Sir Arthur Aston, Lord Bernard Stuart commanding the king's guards, a *troupe dorée*, composed entirely of gentlemen, whose annual incomes are said to have exceeded the united fortunes of all the members who, at the outbreaking of the war, were voters in both houses, a good park of artillery, under the trusty Sir John Heydon, and the adventurous prince — himself a host—leading the cavalry, consisting of the very flower of the youthful gentry, practiced in arms, and high in chivalrous and daring spirit.

Then, early in October, having resolved to strike a blow, and anxious to give battle to his enemies, the king marched hastily from Shrewsbury upon the capital.

Meantime, the Earl of Essex, who had been recently appointed by the parliament their general-in-chief, left the metropolis with an array some fifteen thousand strong, more thoroughly equipped and better armed than were the gentlemen of the opposing host, but far inferior to them in that sustaining and burning spirit, which is of more avail than tenfold numbers in the day of battle. The earl's instructions were to tender to the king a joint petition of the houses, beseeching him to leave the gathering of malignants, whose ill counsels had so far prevailed to alienate him from his loving subjects, and to repair at once to the vicinity of his most loyal parliament; and, in the case that this petition should prove of no effect, to rescue him, by force of arms, from the foul traitors who surrounded and misled him. To this intent, he was provided with all the requisites that constitute an army, a heavy train of well-arranged artillery, with ammunition and supplies of all kinds in profuse abundance, a powerful brigade of horse, under the Earl of Bedford and Sir William Balfour; and a picked body of the London train-bands, well disciplined and admirably well appointed.

Among the numerous nobles who accompanied the general of the parliament, two, perhaps, merit an especial notice, the young lords Rochford and Fielding, as being destined soon to meet, as foemen in the shock of battle, their own fathers, the earls of Dover and of Denbigh, who were enrolled as volunteers in the king's guard of horse. Many there were, indeed, in this array, who yielded not in spirit or in valor to the proudest cavalier of Charles; many who panted for the onset with all the patriotic zeal of freemen trampled and oppressed, with all the bitter and fanatic rancor of religious prejudice, and these were more than matches for the best of Rupert's soldiery. But many more were doubtful, and reluctant, and affected by the cold and backward spirit of their leaders, who felt, perhaps, a secret apprehension that, in battling for the liberty and constitution of their land, they might in some degree be warring against the interests of their order.

Such was the aspect of affairs, and such the state of

parties, when, on a brilliant morning toward the last days of October, a gallant regiment of horse wound its way through the deep green lanes and devious woodlands of Northampton toward the little town of Keinton, distant, perhaps, some twenty miles, at which it was beginning to be understood that Essex had established his headquarters. An animating and lively spectacle they formed, as they gleamed out and disappeared among the lofty hedges and dense coppices, still glorious in the leafy garniture of variegated autumn, their polished armor glinting back the cloudless sunshine in long and dazzling flashes, their colors fluttering in the cheerful breeze, their videttes warily surveying every thicket, the matches of their harquebusses ready kindled, and their extended lines sweeping along the irregular wood-roads in serpentine and wavy order; pausing at every brook or dell where they might possibly be set upon at disadvantage, until their advanced guard should fall back with tidings that their path was unobstructed; and varying their array from open file to solid column, as the nature of the ground might dictate. The leader of this splendid body was a fine-looking figure, in the prime of life, well formed and stately, and far above the ordinary height of men. He wore a military coat of strong buff leather, garnished with fringe of tawny silk three inches broad, and loops of golden braid, partially covered by a breast-plate and its corresponding back-piece, polished till they shone bright as silver. He had no gorget, but a rich cravat of Flanders lace, with long, transparent ends, half veiling the clear steel on which it fell. His dark curled hair flowed down his neck beneath the rim of a steel cap or morion, exquisitely damasked, but without crest or feather; his hands were guarded by high gauntlets, and his lower limbs by breeches of the same material, similarly ornamented with his cassock, and strong jack-boots that would have set a sabre-cut at naught. His sword, a two-edged, basket-hilted rapier of uncommon length, hung from an orange-colored scarf, betokening his adherence to the parliament, its army having adopted for their badge that color from the ancient liveries of Essex, as the cavaliers had assumed for their distinctive uniform black feathers

and blue shoulder-knots; although the fashion of his garments and the general bearing of the wearer were more in character with the demeanor and the principles of their opponents, than of those stern and gloomy fanatics who are so generally and so erroneously believed to have composed at this time the great numerical strength of the liberal, or to speak more justly, constitutional party. The animal he rode, a mare of splendid action, symmetry, and size, was evidently a practiced charger, and accoutred, as became one, with demipique and holsters, and all that goes to the equipment of a war-horse. In these minutiæ, no less than in the accurate array and perfect discipline of the tall, hardy-looking youths who rode along behind him in the strictest silence, in the condition and the bitting of the horses, and, above all, in the cool intelligence with which he listened to the varying reports of his subordinates, the quick, decisive firmness which made known, and the prompt energy which carried out, his orders, might be discovered at a glance the officer of many actions; the soldier, on whose mind no lesson of experience had been lost, until his very nature was no more the same; that which was once an effort, once the result of intricate and thoughtful calculation, arising now from an intuitive foreknowledge, more like the wondrous instinct of an animal than the deep reasoning combinations of a man!

It wanted, perhaps, an hour of noon when this detachment, having extricated itself, without so much as hearing of an enemy, from the wide tracts of woodland, portions of which may still be seen in the adjacent counties of Huntingdon and Bedford, had reached the summit of a considerable eminence, which, falling away steeply toward the west, commanded an extensive view over the velvet pastures of Northampton, checkered with cornfields and dark tracts of fallow — with many a whitewashed cottage peering from out the foliage of its orchards, and many a village steeple, with its mossy graves and tufted yew-trees, and here and there some castellated mansion, scarce seen amid its shadowy plantations — stretching away till they were bounded far to westward by the blue hills of Warwickshire. Just on the brow of

the declivity there stood a large and isolated farm, with stabling and outhouses sufficient to accommodate a hundred head of cattle; upon the green before it the leader of the party drew his bridle, and, after a quick glance across the champaign at his feet, and another toward the sun, which had already passed its height, entering the dwelling, held short conversation with the sturdy yeoman who possessed the fertile acres. Before five minutes had elapsed he issued from the lowly doorway, ordering his party to dismount and pile their arms, and take what brief refreshment the farmhouse might offer during an hour's halt.

A hasty bustle followed, as down the troopers sprang with jingling spur and scabbard, and merriment suppressed no longer by the rigid discipline enforced upon the march. No oaths, however, or profane and Godless clamors were heard, disgracing equally the officers who tolerated and the men who uttered them. Gayety there was, and decent, sober mirth, but naught of boisterous, much less licentious revelling. Videttes were stationed on commanding points, patrols detailed, and then, the horses picketed and well supplied with provender, fires were lighted, and canteens produced with all their savory stores; and the men, stretched at length on the smooth greensward, chatted and laughed as gaily over their hurried meal as though they were engaged in some exciting sylvan exercise, and not in the tremendous toil of warfare. The hour allotted for their stay had well-nigh passed, when, from their farther outpost, a horseman galloped in, bloody with spurring, and, driving through the scattered groups, flung his rein heedlessly upon his charger's neck, and turned him loose before the door, while, with an air betokening the consciousness of bearing high and stern intelligence, he hastened to convey his tidings to his officer. There needed not, however, words to tell the men that danger was at hand. A moment's anxious gaze at the vidette, and the jest ceased, the flagon was suspended ere it reached the thirsty lip, the laugh was not laughed out. Another moment, and the fires were all deserted; the remnants of the meal laid hastily aside; horses, recruited by their feed, were bri-

dled; swords buckled on, and helmets braced, and fire-arms inspected; and, ere their leader came again among them, in anxious conversation with the messenger, they waited to mount only till the ready trumpets should sound "horse and away."

"Get you to horse!" he said, "get you to horse as silently as may be! But spare your breath," he added, turning abruptly to the bugler, who was already handling his instrument, "till it be needed for a charge, which, an' we be so lucky as I deem we are, it may be — and right early. Sir Edmund Winthrop, get your men into line as speedily as may be; but move not until farther signal! My charger, Anderton; and let a sergeant's guard mount instantly! I go to reconnoitre; a bugler with the party. Soh! Steady, men, steady!" and, without farther pause, he leaped into his saddle, and, followed by the small detachment, galloped at a fierce pace down the hillside, rugged and broken as it was, in company with the patrol who had brought in the tidings. Close to the bottom of the hill whereon the troops were halting there ran a deep and hollow gorge, cutting across the road which they had kept thus far directly at right angles, and screened from observation on the upper side by a long, straggling belt of furze and underwood, with here and there a huge and weather-beaten oak or glossy beech, forming the outskirts of a heavy mass of forest that fringed, for several miles in length, the extreme left of the level country across which their line of march would lead them.

Through this gorge, as the sentinel reported, a powerful force of cavalry was moving toward the causeway at scarcely two miles distance; but whether friends or foes he might not, as he said, determine. Checking his charger at the junction of the roads, the officer dismounted; and, taking off his head-piece lest its glitter should betray him, stole forward through the trees to a high sandstone bluff commanding the whole gorge. From this he instantly discovered the approaching troops, who had so nearly come upon him unawares. There were at least five hundred horse in view, all cuirassiers completely cased in steel, escorting, as it seemed, a strong brigade of field artillery. When first they had been seen

by the vidette, they were emerging from tl e forest-land alluded to before, and had attempted, as he said, a cross-road visible from the hillside; but it had proved so miry, as he judged from the slow progress of the guns, that they had countermarched, and were advancing steadily, as now beheld, under the guidance of a countryman who rode beside their leader, toward the sandy gorge by which they evidently hoped to gain the practicable road.

Earnestly did the wary partisan gaze on the glittering columns, searching their movements, and examining their dress and arms with eager scrutiny, and ever and anon sweeping the country in their rear with an inquiring glance, that seemingly expected farther indications from that quarter. But it was all in vain! The regiment in view wore neither scarfs, nor any badge that might inform him of their politics or party; their colors were all furled around the staves and cased in oil-skin; and all, from which he might in anywise conjecture of whether host they formed a portion, was the exact and veteran discipline their movements indicated; far too exact, as he supposed from the reports prevailing through the country, for the tumultuary levies of the Puritans. The hollow way on which they were advancing opened, at a mile's distance, on the plain, and it appeared that the new-comers were about to enter it unthinking of surprise, and confident, perhaps, in their own power. "If they be foes, we have them!" cried the partisan. "Back, Anderton, back to the regiment, ride for your life! tell Major Armstrong to lead down three troops, dismounted, with their harquebusses ready, and their matches lighted, beneath the cover of yon dingle on the hillside till he shall reach this gorge, then line it with his musketry. Let Anstruther wheel, with three more, about yon round-topped hillock; in half an hour he may debouche upon the plain, or sooner, if he hear our shot, and charge upon the rear of yon horse-regiment; they will be in the trap ere then. Sir Edmund Winthrop will lead down the rest by the same road we came — I tarry for him! Away! Be swift and silent! Away! for more than life is on your speed!" and, at the word, the subaltern dashed fu-

riously away, spurning the pebbles high into the air at every bound, and instantly was lost to sight behind the angle of the sandy banks, while he who had commanded, after another wistful gaze toward the approaching squadron, returned with leisurely and quiet steps to his good charger. With his own hands he drew the girths more tight, looked to each strap and buckle of his rein and stirrups, patted her arched crest with a fleeting smile, and mounting, rode, with half a dozen followers, sharply along the gorge, as if to meet the strangers, who now seemed disposed to pause upon the plain, and reconnoiter, ere they should enter a defile so perilous and narrow.

Just at this moment, while a score or two of troopers rode out from the advanced guard of the horse, which had now halted, and warily dispersing themselves among the broken ground, began to beat the thickets with deliberate and jealous scrutiny, a low, stern hum arose from the dark corps of cuirassiers, increasing still and swelling on the ear, till it was clearly audible for a full mile around, a burst of deep-toned, manly voices, harsh perhaps in themselves, and tuneless, but harmonized by distance and the elastic atmosphere on which they floated, till they were blended at least into a solemn and melodious sound. Louder they rose, and louder on the breeze, and now were answered by a faint and dream-like echo from out the dim aisles of the forest in their rear, among the leafy screens of which the arms and standards of another and another band might fitfully be seen to glitter. It was the soul-inspiring crash of sacred music, the peal of choral voices untaught and undirected, save by the impulse of a thousand hearts attuned to one high key of patriotic piety, unmixed with instruments of wind or string, a deep, sonorous diapason, the soldier's anthem to the God of battles and the Lord of hosts!

"Arise! arise!" the mighty sound went forth, its every syllable distinctly audible to the excited listener:

> "Arise! arise! oh God, our God, arise!
> Ride on in might, in terror, and renown—
> A kindling flame, their nobles to consume,
> A two-edged sword, to smite their princes down!

"Thou that dost break the arrows and the bow,
Thou that dost knap the ashen spear in sunder,
Thou, Lord of Hosts, that gav'st the horse his strength,
And clothed the volumes of his neck in thunder,

"Be thou our rock, our fortress of defense,
Our horn of safety, in whose strength we trust,
So shall their hosts be chaff before the wind,
So shall their thousands grovel in the dust!

"So shall our feet be crimson with their blood,
Their tongues our dogs shall purple with the same;
The fowls of air shall have them for a spoil,
Their pride a hissing, and a curse their name!

"For not in armor, nor the winged speed
Of chargers, do we hope, but only see,
By whose great aid their vauntings to outspeed,
Most Merciful—most Mighty, only Thee!"

Scarce had the first sound reached the leader's ear, before he checked his mare abruptly—"Walters," he cried at once, "away with you, and overtake him ere he gain the regiment. These be no enemies, but friends. Let not a troop descend from the hillside; bid them await me, as they be, in order! Spare not your spurs, nor fear to spoil your horse-flesh; we have no time to lose! I well had deemed," he added, muttering to himself, after the orderly had galloped off with his commands—"I well had deemed their rear was many mile advanced past this ere now. Pray heaven that Essex lack not men to hold the king in check, as he is like to do, if that this news be sooth how he hath gathered head toward Keinton and Edgehill!" and, without farther words, he hastened down the road, to be, as soon as he had cleared the first projection of the broken banks, discovered by the reconnoitring party in advance. A dozen carbines were presented on the instant at a short range—"Stand—ho!"

"Friends! friends!" he shouted, in reply, but without altering his pace, "can you not see our colors?" waving his orange scarf abroad, as he closed with the foremost trooper.

"Stand, friend, then!—if that friend you be—stand, friend, and give the word!" returned the other gruffly, "stand! or I do profess that I will shoot, yea! shoot thee to the death!"

"How now, thou peevish knave," replied the officer, in high and ireful tones. "Recover instantly thy carbine,

and carry me straight unto the leader of yon horse! Who is he that commands them?"

For a moment's space the grim parliamentarian stubbornly gazed upon the features of the gallant who addressed him, as if reluctant to obey his mandate; but then a gleam of recognition flashed across his sunburnt features. "I crave your pardon," he said, half abashed; "it is, an' I mistake not, Lieutenant-colonel Arden, of the parliament's—"

"Lead on then, sirrah! since thou knowest me," interrupted Edgar, shortly, "lead on, an' thou wouldst not repent it, and tell me who commands yon horse brigade!"

"Stout Colonel Cromwell," answered the soldier, more respectfully — "stout and courageous Colonel Cromwell. He will, I do believe, rejoice at this encounter. This way, good sir. Yonder he sits on the black horse beside the standard, awaiting our return. Lo you! he sees us, and the files move onward!"

And he spoke truly; for, as the cavalry perceived the videttes moving orderly and slowly back, they filed off, troop succeeding troop, toward the entrance of the lane, advancing on a gentle trot in regular and beautiful array. As they passed Arden, many a scrutinizing eye perused his figure and equipments, and in most instances a sanctified and solemn sneer disturbed the dark repose of their grave features, called up, as it would seem, by the rich dress and courtly air of the young officer, which, in their wonted parlance, were denounced as "fleshly lusts that war against the soul," devices of the Evil One, fringes, phylacteries, and trappings of the beast. Nor, in meanwhile, did Edgar turn a heedless or incurious glance toward those with whom, discarding friends and kindred, birthright, and rank, and chivalrous association, as things of small avail compared to the great common weal, he had now cast his lot forever. The first emotion of his mind was deep anxiety, the second wonder, and the third unqualified and unmixed admiration. Never, he thought, in Germany or France, never, among the veteran legions of the Lion of the North, the Protestant Gustavus, had he beheld superior discipline, or men more soldier-like

and promising. Mounted on strong black chargers of full sixteen hands in height, their furniture of the most simple kind, but well designed and in the best condition, their iron panoply, corslet, and helm, and taslets, stainless and brilliant, and, above all their bearing and demeanor, their seats upon their horses, firm yet easy, their muscular and well-developed limbs, their countenances full of resolution, and breathing all, despite the difference of individual character, and the various operations of the same affection on minds of different bias, a strange expression of religious sentiment, solemn in some, and stern, or even sullen, in others wild, fanatical, exalted, and triumphant, yet in all more or less apparent, as evidently forming the great spring and motive of their action.

Still, though attentive in the first degree to the essential rules of military discipline, keeping an accurate and well-dressed front, and managing their heavy chargers with precison, there was not any of that deep, respectful silence among these military saints which Edgar had been used to look for in the strictly-ordered service of the Netherlands, and to esteem a requisite of soldiership; but, on the contrary, as every troop rode past him, there was a constant hum of conversation, suppressed, indeed, and low, but still distinctly audible; and he might mark the knotted brows and clinched hands of the vehement disputers, arguing — as it would seem from the decided gestures, and the texts which he occasionally caught lending an elevated savor to their homely language, and, more than all, from the continual appeal to the well-worn and greasy bibles which each of these stern controversialists bore at his girdle—on questions of religious discipline or points of abstruse doctrine. Although this mixture of the soldier and religionist, this undue, and, as it seemed to him, irreverent blending of things good and holy with the dreadful trade of blood, jarred painfully on his correct and feeling mind, he could not but acknowledge that this dark spirit of religious zeal, this confidence in their own overweening righteousness, this fixed, unwavering belief that they were the elected and predestined instruments of the Most High — "to execute," as he could hear them cry aloud, "vengeance upon the

heathen and punishment upon the people!—to bind their kings in chains and their nobles in fetters of iron!" was indeed a mighty and effective agent wherewith to oppose that chivalrous, enthusiastic bravery, that loyal, self-devoting valor which inflamed the high-born army of the cavaliers to deeds of noble daring.

Nor did he entertain a doubt, when he perceived that the extraordinary person who commanded them, was himself occupied in preaching, or expounding rather, the mysterious prophecies of the Old Testament, to which especially the Puritans inclined their ear, to an attentive knot of officers, grouped, some upon their horses, and yet more dismounted, around the regimental standard, but that he had some reason far more cogent than mere feelings of devotion for thus encouraging a spirit so unusual in the breasts of his stout followers. Cromwell had recently been elevated to the rank of colonel, more even in consideration of the powerful and trusty regiment which he had levied from the freeholders and yeomanry of Huntingdon by his own personal and private influence, than of his services performed already, not either few or inconsiderable, keeping the cavaliers in check, surprising many of their leaders, anticipating all their meditated risings, and cutting off all convoys, whether of money or munitions, throughout the counties of the Eastern Association; and now, for the first time, in actual command, as he met the eye of Arden, he sat on his powerful black war-horse, bestriding him, as it would seem, with giant strength, and perfect mastery of leg and hand, but with an air wholly unmilitary and devoid of ease or grace, sheathed nearly cap-a-pie in armor of bright steel, heavy and exquisitely finished, but utterly without relief or ornament of any kind. A band or collar of plain linen, with a broad hem, fastened about his short Herculean neck, varied alone the stern simplicity of his attire; no feather waved above his low and graceful casque; no shoulder-knot or scarf bedecked his weapon, which was girt about his middle by a belt of buff three inches at the least in width, and balanced on the right side by a formidable dudgeon and the brass-bound case of the familiar bible, which he now held extended in his left hand, while with

the finger of his right he vehemently smote the open pages at each emphatic pause of his discourse.

His features showed not now so sanguine or so kindled as when Arden last beheld them; but, on the contrary, there was a mild, half-veiled expression about the heavy eye; and though the lines were strong and marked as ever, there was more of deliberate and quiet resolution than of imperiousness denoted by the firmness of his mouth. It was the countenance, he thought, of a calm visionary, pensive and meditative in his mood, and rather steady in the maintenance of his own fixed opinions than zealous to proscribe or controvert the fancies or the rights of others. But he had little time for noting the expression, changed as he fancied it to be, of his superior, much less for marking the diverse features of the martial auditors; for, as he drew nigh to the spot whereon they stood, Cromwell ended his discourse, and, with a word or two of military precept, was dismissing his attendants to their several stations. Several dashed past him as he rode up to the little eminence on which the colors were erected, and but two were waiting near the colonel when he reached him; one a bull-necked, coarse-featured, and ungainly looking person, with a gay feather in his morion, a showy tassel on his rapier's hilt, and a falling collar of some low-priced lace hanging above his gorget; the other an erect and well-made man, not past the prime of youth, with features singularly noble and expressive, though of an almost Spanish swarthiness, and tinctured with a deep and melancholy gravity.

"Ha! Colonel Arden!" exclaimed Oliver, his eye joyfully flashing as he recognized him—"right glad am I to see you—not carnally, nor with a worldly-minded and a selfish pleasure, but for that there will be work to do anon, in which the righteous cause shall need all arms of its supporters! Have you a power at hand?—where be they?—in what what force?—not travel-worn, I trust me!"

"Six hundred horse," Edgar replied, "on the height yonder; but for those trees you might behold them where we stand! I left them but just now, to reconnoi-

tre your advance, under Sir Edmund Winthrop, my major."

"Good! good!" cried Cromwell, eagerly; "and how far have you marched to-day? Be your men travel-toiled, your steeds leg-weary?—for verily we have a march before us."

"We have travelled but six brief miles this forenoon, and barely sixteen yesterday. My men are in right spirits, and my horses fresh! I could accomplish twenty miles ere nightfall, and that without fatigue!"

"Surely the Lord is gracious," was the answer; "and of his grace, too, shall we right soon make trial. My Lord of Essex hath, ere now, his post at Keinton; and the man Charles of Stuart hath at length mustered head to face him. 'Tis marvel if they be not at it even now. I fear me the lord general shall lack both horse and cannon; but we have marched already a sore distance with our ponderous guns and heavy armature, nor may I now adventure to press on more hastily without dispersing my command. Ride with me to your regiment, good sir; I trow you were best speedily move forward. Keinton is barely twelve miles distant, and the roads, they tell me, are sound and passable;" and, as he spoke, touching his charger lightly with the spur, he broke into a managed canter. "Cornet, advance your colors," he exclaimed, in short, keen accents, strangely at variance with the monotonous and inexpressive tones of his discourse when unexcited; "sound kettle-drums, and march!" and, riding briskly forward, he easily passed the troops while filing through the lane. "Halt them here, Ireton," he said to the dark-favored officer who had accompanied him, as he turned into the main road, having outstripped the forces; "halt them in column here, within the lane, till I return; and, Desborough, do thou ride back to Hampden's regiment of foot—it is a mile or so in the rear—and bid him bring it up as rapidly as may be. Now, Colonel Arden, I attend you!"

CHAPTER II.

EDGEHILL.

The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain
Armies or kingdoms.

WORDSWORTH.—*Sonnets to Liberty.*

BETWEEN those two prompt and clear-headed soldiers—for Arden was such by practice and experience, as Cromwell was by nature and at the dictates of his own indomitable will to be one—no farther colloquy was needed. They rode away at once to Edgar's regiment, where he had posted it on the hill, and, as they went, Cromwell informed him briefly, and with none of those prolix and verbose sentences with which he was at times accustomed to confuse the senses of his hearers, that he, as senior officer, and therefore in command of the brigade forming Lord Essex's rear guard, was marching up, at his best pace, with his own trusty cavalry, and two—the stoutest—of the parliament's foot regiments, besides a strong division of field guns; that, by want of intelligence, the general—as he had learned himself but yesterday—was hastening right upon the king, and, he was fearful, would fall, unawares and unprepared for battle, upon his very outposts!

"These tidings I received of a sure hand," he added, "though whence it needeth not to advertise you. Whom the Lord listeth to enlighten, surely at his own time he shall inform him. But so it is; and it may be that Essex knoweth not his peril! Wherefore I pray you—ha! be these your men? I do profess to you I hold them stout and soldierly; not like the drunken tapsters and vile turn-coat serving men who—fie on it! that I should say so—do compose the bulk of our array! Truly these fellows shall do credit to the cause; so that the spirit, the

right leaven be toward, and the Lord strike on our side! Wherefore I pray you lead them, as swiftly as you find consist with order, upon Keinton. If that they have not yet joined battle, say thus to the lord general, that I beseech him hold off from them so long as he may; I shall be with him by nine of to-morrow's clock. Ha! heard you nothing?" he broke off abruptly, as a deep, distant sound rolled heavily upon the air; and, before Arden might reply, the sullen rumbling was again repeated, like the faint muttering of a rising thunder-storm, or the premonitory growling of an earthquake. "It was not thunder!" answered Edgar, in the voice of one asserting rather than questioning; "there are no clouds aloft, nor yet on the horizon!"

"Ordnance!" exclaimed the other—"ordnance, and heavier, too, than ours! Listen, now listen!" And again the heavy rolling sound came surging down the wind, which freshened slightly from the westward. Again it came after a momentary pause, yet louder than before, and more distinct; and then continued without interval, the deep, unquestionable voice of a hot cannonade.

"Away, sir—God go with you!" cried the stern Puritan, excited now beyond the bounds of self-restraint. "Tarry not on the way, nor loiter! Gird up your loins, I say. Ride on! ride on, and conquer! Verily, but that it is the Lord's own doing, verily, Edgar Arden, I would have envied you your fortune. Ride on—you shall be yet in time—ride on—amen! Selah!"

While he yet spoke, the officers and men, stirred up already by the near sound of battle, and almost maddened with excitement by the exulting and prophetic cries of Cromwell, were vying with each other, these to give forth, those to obey, and almost to anticipate, the needful orders; and, as he uttered the last words at the full pitch of his piercing voice, the trumpets rang a wild and thrilling flourish; the squadron, with a single shout, unbidden and unanimous, that spoke the burning feelings of the troopers, swept on at a hard trot; and, in an instant, not a sound was to be heard but the thick-beating clatter of the hoofs, mixed with the clang of spur and scabbard, and

now and then a boom of the deep kettle-drum timing the pace of the advance.

Onward! onward they hurried at the utmost speed which prudence would admit, which nothing but the admirable quality and high condition of their chargers enabled them to prosecute. Mile after mile was passed, and still the dull and awful roar, the knell of many a gallant spirit, waxed clearer and more clear. Having accomplished seven miles within the hour, they halted for ten minutes in a small hamlet to water and to breathe their horses; and there, when the confused and constant noise of their own rapid march was silent, they might distinguish the first sharp explosion of the leading gun in every rolling volley; and ever and anon, between the deep-mouthed cannon, the grinding rattle of the musketry was audible, though faintly.

Onward! onward again, and, ere another hour elapsed, Arden had marked the clouds of smoke surging and eddying above the distant hills. The regiment cleared the verge of a low eminence; a gentle valley slept below them in the still misty radiance of a rich autumnal sunset; a tranquil stream wound through it, crossed by a lofty one-arched bridge, built, as was evident from the bright ripples of the ford beside it, merely for use in times of wintry flood, and to the left, at a short mile above the bridge, nestled the whitewashed cottages of a neat country village. The ridge which bounded this fair dale toward the west, though cultivated at the base, and checkered with dark woods and golden stubbles, lay bare toward the rounded summits in unclosed and open sheep-walks. Above these summits the volumed smoke rose white as fleeces of the purest wool, and scarce less solid to the eye, relieving every object on the brow as plainly as though it had stood out against a clear horizon; while all the mingled din of battle rolled up, a near and fearful contrast to the sweet peace of that secluded spot.

Just as they gained a fair view of the valley and the heights beyond, a single figure crossed the opposite swell, dark and distinctly seen; a horseman on a furious gallop. As he descended, a slant sunbeam glanced upon his iron headpiece — he was a trooper — flying. Another rushed

across the ridge — another, and another — a confused and panic-stricken group.

"Forward! — secure the passage of the stream! Forward! ho! forward!" and at a yet more rapid pace they plunged down the descent; they reached the causeway of the bridge — they lined the banks with their harquebusiers, and waited the arrival of the fugitives. On came the first, urging his jaded steed, but urging him in vain; his sword was gone; his holsters were empty; his buff-coat was soiled and splashed with many a miry stain. His spurs alone were bloody. Long ere he reached the bridge Arden's quick eye had caught the orange scarf, and he rode forth alone to meet him. At first the fugitive drew up his horse as though he would have turned, but a fresh roar of cannon from behind decided him. "All's lost! all's lost!" he cried — "all's lost! Fly! fly! Rupert is close behind!"

"Silence, for shame!" shouted the partisan — "coward and slave, be silent, or I cleave thee to the earth! If all be lost, why rages yon hot cannonade? How far from this to the field?"

"A short three miles," replied the other, trembling, and fearful no less of new acquaintance than of the foes he fled. Meanwhile on came the rest — all panic-stricken, travel-soiled, and weaponless; but not one man was wounded.

"The cowards!" Edgar muttered, as if carelessly, when he rejoined his men, fearful lest they might be disheartened; "the vile, dastard hounds! that fled without blow stricken or blood drawn! But that 't were loss of time, I would draw out a file for execution. We will advance, and win more easily, that none are left to cumber us with heartless counsels! Fly on, ye dogs," he cried, more loudly, as he wheeled his men once more into their column — "fly on, and pray the while ye fly that ye meet not with Cromwell on your route, else shall ye but repent that the cavaliers made not an end of you before your race began; for, an' I know him, he will cut it right short with a halter or a volley!" And, with a scornful laugh, he cantered on, eager to gain the vantage of the hill, and seeing at a glance that no more runaways poured over it

'It cannot be," he said to his second in command — "it cannot be the day goes utterly against us, else how should these have fled three miles from the encounter, and still the firing on both sides continue — continue, said I — nay, but it waxes warmer!"

They reached the summit of the ridge, and at first sight Edgar indeed believed that all was over. A long broad valley lay outstretched beneath him, that might almost be called a plain, the foreground scattered thick with groups of roundheads, flying, here singly, here in bodies, to the south, toward the town of Keinton, in a line nearly parallel to the range of heights on which he stood; while in the middle distance he might see a torrent of dispersed pursuing cavalry, with flaunting plumes and fluttering scarfs, swords brandished to the sun, and pistol-shots all redly flashing out through the dense smoke, as unrelentingly they urged the massacre. But, as he looked more steadfastly upon the scene, he could distinguish, at some two or three miles' distance toward the northern verge of the unbroken valley, two dark, uninterrupted lines, whence rose the smoke and burst the vivid flashes of artillery with undiminished vigor. He could discern, between the cloudy screens, the wavering and wheeling masses that still waged the balanced fight, and he could hear the rattling volleys of the musketry sharp and incessant.

"'T is but our cavalry," he said — "'tis but our cavalry that fly, and their horse-general has lost a golden opportunity; had he but wheeled upon our flank, when the dog-troopers fled, he might have gained the battle. But it is now too late, and, an' he look not out the sharper, we may yet give him a rebuff he dreams not of. Sound trumpets—ha! sound merrily a rally and a charge! Advance, brave hearts, we will redeem the day. For lo!" he added, with rare tact, as he perceived the royal horse relaxing their pursuit, and heard their trumpets winding a recall — "for lo! they have perceived us, and retreat already!"

And down the slope he moved in admirable order, interposing a small wood between his force and the retiring cavalry of the victorious royalists; whom, notwithstanding his most politic vaunt, he little wished at that time to

encounter. Just ere he sank upon the level ground he carefully reviewed the scene before him, and was even more convinced than ever that the battle was indeed still undetermined; and, farther yet, that the royalist horse were at the last aware of their mistake in urging the pursuit too far; for he might see them straining every nerve now to repair their error, as they swept back toward the left-hand rear of the contending parties, leaving thereby the access to the right wing of Lord Essex, whom Arden justly deemed to lie between himself and the king's forces, easy and unobstructed.

Instantly he perceived, and profited as instantly by this advantage; marching at a sharp trot across the field strewed with the mangled carcasses of those who, by their dastard flight, had lost the wretched lives they sacrificed their honor to preserve, and forfeited all claim to that precarious boon, a soldier's pity. Once on the level ground, he could discover nothing farther, and the suspense was fearful; and now the cannonading ceased; the musketry fell thicker and more constant; then that ceased likewise, and was followed by the faintly-heard hurrah of charging horse, and the wild chorus of a psalm. "The day is ours," he shouted, as he recognized the sounds — "on! on! to share the glory!"

Faster they hurried, and but little time elapsed ere he brought up his squadron, without the slightest opposition, or indeed notice, on the king's part, to the extreme right of the position occupied in the commencement of the action by the army of the parliament. The moment was indeed most critical, and Edgar could not but perceive, as, having left his regiment for the moment in command of his major, he rode up and reported to the general, that his arrival was deemed singularly opportune. Never, perhaps, had been a field more nearly lost; never a victory more madly cast away; never a battle poised more equally. The base desertion of Sir Faithful Fortescue, the terror-stricken flight of Waller's horse on the left wing before the fiery charge of Rupert, and the defeat of the right wing by Wilmot and Sir Arthur Aston, had left both flanks of the parliamentarians utterly naked and unguarded; so that a single charge by either of the royalist com-

manders upon the flank or rear which they had turned, must have annihilated all of their array which yet stood firm, the foot under the earl in person, and a reserve of horse under Sir William Balfour. But with that desperate and selfish fury which neutralized, in every instance, the effects of his undaunted valor, Rupert drove past the left, as Wilmot did by the right, of Essex, trampling and cutting down their unresisting countrymen for several miles' distance from the field, the former suffering his men to sack the town of Keinton, and to disperse among the baggage of the enemy; while his desertion had not only robbed the king of all his hopes of victory, but actually placed him in a more evil plight, and peril far more imminent, than had defeat the foe.

For Balfour, with his squadron of reserve, seeing the plain entirely clear of horse, had charged the royal foot with such a steadiness of persevering courage, that he had cut the Earl of Lindsey's regiment to pieces, taking that nobleman, with his brave son Lord Willoughby, both desperately wounded, prisoners, winning the king's own standard, throwing the centre into perilous confusion, and hewing his way almost to the person of the monarch. Just at this moment, when a bold advance of his whole line must have completed the king's ruin, Lord Essex was compelled, by Rupert's reäppearance on his left with his fast rallying cavalry, who, though in disarray, and tired both horse and man, were flushed with their success and high in spirit, to recall Balfour to make head against him; and that bold leader's trumpets were calling off his troopers from their half-achieved success when Arden reached the field, and was directed instantly to move his fresh men forward to protect the left wing of the infantry till Balfour should draw off and relieve him.

His troops, though new to service, were admirably disciplined and full of daring confidence in their tried leader; and with such promptitude and regularity did they manœuvre and deploy in face of a superior body, that he almost regretted that there was no better opportunity to prove their mettle and to flesh their maiden swords. His duty quietly performed, and the reserve of Balfour being reformed in haste and fronting Rupert, he was commanded

once again to occupy his first position on the right, and now instinctively he saw that either army might be deemed half conquered, that a single charge, nay, but a single demonstration, would suffice to win an absolute and undisputed victory. Each host was spiritless and disarrayed; the leaders on each side confused and doubtful; the troops exhausted, slack, and heartless. Vainly he prayed the general-in-chief to suffer him to risk his single regiment in but one charge on Rupert's half-collected squadrons; pointing out to him clearly, but without effect, the strong presumption that his fresh men and vigorous horses must sweep away, like dust, the cavaliers, worn out with the lassitude forever consequent on over-fierce excitement, and troubled farther at finding themselves assailed from having of late been assailants — and the certainty that, if such should be the case, undoubted victory must ensue.

The earl was cold and dubious. "We may not hope," he said — "we may not hope for victory to-night. It is a mercy from on high — I had right nearly said a miracle — that we stand here as now, at vantage, holding the better of a doubtful day. An hour ago methought that all was lost. Moreover, it has gone tenfold more fatally with them than us. We have lost privates, men neither high of heart nor strong of hand, much less of eminence or wisdom; they the first flowers of England. Oh! I could well-nigh weep, but that 't were treason to our cause, for the pure blood that has been shed like water, Lindsey and Aubigney, and Stewart, and Edmund Verney, the bravest and the best of the array, all lost, all lost in this accursed quarrel! Two more such fields as this were fatal to the king, while ten such would but leave us, at the worst, where now we are!"

Slowly and unconvinced Edgar rode back to his command; and as he watched the movements of the enemy, now holding the precise position they had occupied three hours before, whatever doubt he might have entertained till then, vanished at once — for he beheld the hapless Charles, armed as becomes a king to battle for his crown, all steel from spur to helmet, a mantle of black velvet, with the star and George of diamonds, floating above his armor — reining his snow-white charger gallantly among

his wavering lines, beseeching them "once more," with energetic gestures — "once more to charge the rebels!" — and he beheld the faint and false-hearted denial; for not by any prayer or promise could those to whom he spoke with words of fire be wrought upon a second time to dare the onset.

Meanwhile the sun set gloomily in a dense bank of clouds, the night, "that common friend to wearied and dismantled armies," sank darkly down upon the plain so thickly set with sights and sounds of agony and horror that it was but one mighty charnel-house; and the two hosts, each on the ground whereon they fought, slept anxious and uneasy on their arms; uncertain of their present safety, and unresolved of their proceedings for the morrow.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

> How uncertain
> The fortune of the war is, children know;
> And it being in suspense, on whose fair tent
> Winged victory will make her glorious stand,
> You cannot b'ame the duke, though he appear
> Perplexed and troubled.
>
> MASSINGER.—*Duke of Milan.*

THE morning was yet gray and gloomy after a night of frost, felt the more bitterly by those who bivouacked upon the field, since there was neither tree, nor hedge, nor any other covert nigh to fence them from the piercing wind, when Arden started from the disturbed and unrefreshing slumbers which had crept upon him, beneath the partial shelter of an ammunition tumbrel overturned and broken, uproused by the loud trumpets of the powerful reënforcement brought up before the promised hour by Cromwell. It consisted of two thousand foot, Hampden's and Grantham's regiments, and his own ironsides, whose presence might, on the preceding day, have turned the

doubtful scale, and ended, at a single stroke, the war unfortunately destined to no such speedy termination.

It was a strange and melancholy, though exciting scene, that met his gaze as he arose; the dark skies scarcely dappled in the east by the first paly streaks of dawn; the faint stars waning one by one as the cold light increased, the black brows of the neighboring hills cutting distinct and sharp against the wan horizon; the white and ghostly mist creeping in wreaths along their bases, and curtaining the plain with a dense veil, through which the watchfires of the royal host, at scantly a mile's distance, burnt with a dull and lurid redness, like to the glimmering of a witch's caldron. The foreground was heaped with the carriages of the artillery, horses picqueted in their ranks, and companies of men outstretched on the dank soil, sleeping upon no better couches than their dripping cloaks, beneath no warmer canopy than the o'ercast and gusty firmament. Nor were the sounds that rose at intervals from the opposing camps, and the deserted battle field between them, less wild and mournful than the images which crowded their nocturnal area. The measured tramp of the unwearied sentinel, now mingled with the clash of armor, seemed close beside the ear, now gradually subsiding into silence as he visited his farther beat. The clang and clatter of the horse patrol, swept farther off at wider distance around the guarded limits, and the deep, melancholy cadence of his occasional "All's well" came to the ear heavily, in tones that seemed to belie the import of the words. The neigh and stamp of restless chargers; the howling of forsaken dogs; and, sadder and more terrible than all beside, the feeble wailing, the half-heard, distant groan, or the long-drawn, but unavailing cry for succor, of maimed and miserable wretches, who had battled and striven with their mortal pangs throughout the livelong night, cursing the unnatural strength that nerved their fainting and reluctant flesh to strive with that inevitable angel, whom their more willing spirit would have welcomed as a rescuer and friend—all these combined to make the dawning day most horrible and hideous.

While Arden was yet listening, with a sick heart and tortured ear, to these too numerous witnesses of human

agony, and pondering upon the dread responsibility of him who, to indulge a lawless thirst after a little brief authority, had let loose on a happy land that most abhorred curse of nations, domestic war, an orderly rode up in haste to crave his presence at the quarters of the general. After a short and rapid walk toward the rear, he reached the spot where Essex, like the meanest of his men, had passed the night, beneath no other roof than the inclement sky. A dozen pikes, irregularly pitched into the ground, and draped with horse-blankets and watch-cloaks, offered a shelter rather nominal than real against the night air on the north and east, while a huge pile of logs sparkled and blazed in front, casting a wavering glare of crimson upon a group of tall and martial-looking officers, collected round the person of their leader, and glittering more obscurely on the arms and figures of a score or two of troopers, who sat motionless on their tall chargers at some short distance in the rear.

The council, as it seemed to Edgar on his first approach, were absolutely silent; but, as he drew nearer, he found that Essex was addressing them, although in tones so low and so subdued that they scarce reached the ears of those for whom they were intended. Nor, as he judged from the expression painted on every countenance — for the lord general ceased from speaking just as he joined the circle — were his words calculated to inspire his listeners with confidence or warlike spirit. A blank, desponding gloom sat darkling on the brows of all, and every eye save those of the new-comers, who stood together and apart a little from the rest, dwelt gloomily upon the ground. It seemed a meeting rather of defeated and despairing fugitives, than of the bold and dauntless spirits who had but yestereven maintained a more than equal strife against the flower of England's nobles — till, suddenly, with his harsh features kindling into passionate and fiery animation, and his eye glancing wildfire, Cromwell, whom Edgar had not hitherto observed, upstarted from a pile of housings and horse-furniture on which he had been seated — "As the Lord liveth," he exclaimed — "as the Lord liveth, we can smite them hip and thigh, if so be that your excellency will give me but command to charge

upon them now, while they yet lie, with faint hearts and with heavy eyes, about their watch-fires. I ask but for my own stout troop of ironsides and Colonel Arden's horse here, if he list to join me — I ask but these, and, verily, I do profess to you, they shall not bide the changing of a buffet; nay, but we shall destroy them utterly, smiting them with the sword, as Joshua smote *them* beside the waters, even the waters of Merom, what time he did to them as the Lord bade him; he houghed their horses and burnt their chariots with fire!"

"It is too late, sir!" returned Essex, coldly—"It is too late! The morning will have broken ere you can get your men to horse."

"Nay, but not so, lord general," anxiously interrupted Cromwell; "my troopers be not yet dismounted; and, of a truth, I do assure you that their spirits are athirst, ay, and their souls an hungered, to do this battle for the Lord!"

"We will not have it so, sir," replied the earl, shortly, and scarcely courteously—we will not have it so. It might endanger our whole host. I pray you, Colonel Cromwell, draw out your horse upon our farthest left, facing thereby Prince Rupert on the king's right wing. And you, fair gentlemen"—turning to Hampden and Grantham—"move up your gallant foot to reënforce our center. Had ye been here but yesterday, I had not feared to gain a complete victory; but now I hold it rash to offer or commence, though, by God's help, we will not shun encounter. Sirs, to your posts. The council is at an end. The day is breaking—lo, there sounds the reveille!"

"Cold council!" muttered Cromwell in the ear of Arden, as he left the presence; "cold council, if not traitorous! and, at the best, false argument!—for an' he could half beat Charles Stuart without us yesterday, sure, with three thousands of fresh men, and those the best of his array, he might now trample him beneath his feet! Besides, with Verney slain outright, and Lindsey captive, and half their officers cut down or grievously entreated, stands it not certain that they must need be faint of heart? Verily! verily! I say to you, there shall be no

good thing befall the righteous cause while such a leader marshals us."

As he concluded he turned off abruptly, mounted his horse, and rode away among his troopers, who awaited their stout colonel in the rear; and, ere ten minutes had elapsed, Edgar might hear them chanting, in subdued and sullen tones, the melancholy psalm, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul," as they marched gloomily away to occupy the post to which they were assigned. At the same time the regiments, which, for the last half hour, had been getting under arms, fell in, and faced the army of the king, now clearly to be seen, as the mists gradually rolled away before the growing daylight, resuming the position it had held before the action of the previous day.

The instruments of music sounded, indeed, and cheerily, and the bright colors fluttered gayly in the freshening breeze; but other sign of spirit or alacrity along the serried ranks Edgar saw none, before he reached his own brave troopers, already mounted in an accurate array, under Sir Edmund Winthrop, and eager — as the heart-stirring shout with which they greeted their commander spoke them, for the onset, of which they deemed his presence the immediate harbinger.

The sun rose broad and bright, kindling the whole expanse of heaven with his fair luster; the mist-wreaths floated upward, and dispersed themselves into the delicate and scale-like clouds, flecking the azure skies, which promise glorious days; the morning gradually passed away, and noon drew nigh, and still each army held its ground, facing the other in the stern array of warfare, both, as it seemed, prepared and resolute to meet, but neither willing to commence the onset. At times, the trumpets on one side would breathe forth a wild flourish of defiance, and a shout or psalm would go up to the peaceful heaven from the other, intended, it might be, to challenge or to irritate the foe into some movement that should lay him open to attack; but the sun rode high in heaven, and hour by hour the chances of a general action became less imminent. Suddenly, at a moment when all those leaders of the parliament, who

deemed it no less for their interest than honor to give battle, almost despaired of an opportunity for sealing their adherence to the cause, there was a movement on the right wing of the royal host. Directly in the center of the field, midway between the lines of either army, four light field-pieces, sakers and culverins, had been abandoned, on the previous day, by the king's infantry, when shattered and disordered, though still fighting with their faces to the foe, by the repeated charge of Balfour's horse. So rapidly had night set in upon the wearied hosts, and perhaps so fearful were both parties of then doing aught which might provoke renewal of the conflict, that these, the proof and prizes of the victory, had been permitted to remain unmoved, either by rescuer or captor, through the long hours of darkness; and, until midday was at hand, no disposition was exhibited to bring them off, whether by cavalier or Puritan. But now, either disposed to fight, if needful, with courage gathered from the weak policy of Essex, or convinced by their inactivity that he should meet with no resistance from the despised and hated roundheads, Rupert dashed forth in person from the right, with a detachment of the king's horseguard, that gallant troop of nobles whose impetuous and headlong daring, though at the first it had passed, like a torrent, sheer through the reeling ranks and weaker cavalry of its opponents, had yet done more against the final gaining of the day than the fiercest struggles of the adversary. Forward they came, mounted on horses that might each have borne a king to battle, rending the air with their repeated cheers, and with the joyous clangor of their defying trumpets, a flood of waving plumes and fluttering scarfs, the bravest and the best born of the land. Midway between the hosts they galloped on, exposing, as it would seem, in very wantonness of bold bravado, the flank of their advance to the stern ironsides of Cromwell, who showed like a dark storm-cloud ready to burst upon their heads with all the crash and ruin of a tempest.

Already were those gloomy moralists exchanging their dull scowls of rigid and abstracted sanctity for the fierce flashings of enthusiastic joy, with which they never failed

to clothe their features when rushing down like eagles to the banquet of the sword! Already were they brandishing their heavy blades aloft in savage exultation. Already were they lifting up their voices in the triumphant psalm which should preface their thundering charge, and, rising high above the din of battle, strike terror and confusion to the hearts of those whom, as they sung, "The Lord—even the Lord of Hosts—shall hunt, to overthrow them!" But, ere the word was given by their colonel, whose sword was in his hand outstretched toward the flaunting cavaliers, on whose destruction he securely counted, an officer came, at the full speed of his spur-galled charger, bearing the mandates of the general.

"Ha! Major Winton," Cromwell exclaimed, with a raised voice and joyous intonation, "you bring us right glad tidings, tidings which my soul comprehendeth ere mine ear hath caught their import. Tarry thou but a little space, and call me coward then, an' thou see them not performed unto the letter; ay! and those gay malignants yonder scattered like chaff before the wind of heaven! Sound trumpets and—"

"Hold! Colonel Cromwell; in the Lord's name, hold!" the other interrupted him, with half frightened energy of zeal; "you do misapprehend! 'T is the lord general's command that you stir not a foot. He would avoid an action."

"Tush, man, it cannot be!" Oliver fiercely cried; "nay, stay me not!—forego thy grasp upon my rein! Let me not now, I say, or truly I will—"

"Nay, sir," returned the officer, cutting again into his speech, as much chagrined by the impetuous gesture and half uttered threat, "you shall do as you list for me; but I do warn you, 't is against express commandment of my Lord of Essex if you shall charge these horse. See how they muster yonder to the front of the main host, dragoons and cavalry, for the support of this detachment. One charge must need bring on a general action."

"The better!" answered Cromwell, with a gloomy frown; "the better—an' we had aught of faith in the good cause, or spirit in our carnal calling. But on his own head be it! Surely the Lord hath deadened his under

standing, causing his heart to fail with terror and with fainting! On his own head be it!" and, as he spoke, he sheathed his rapier, driving it home so furiously that the hilt rang against the iron scabbard with a sharp, angry clatter; "on his own head be the shame, the ruin, and confusion!" and, turning his charger's rein, he rode away toward the rear, in a dark, sullen reverie, determined not to look upon the capture of the guns since he could not prevent it. Nor did he check in any wise, or reprimand the deep and bitter murmurs of reviling which the fierce zealots he commanded launched against the cold and cautious policy that thus forbid them "to arise, and slay the enemy at Karkar, even as Gideon arose when he slew Zebah and Zalmunnah!"

And, in the sight of the whole host, the chivalry of Rupert dashed along, with brandished weapons and bright banners, unharmed at least, if not unheeded. They pounced upon the cannon, and not a sword was drawn or a shot fired. Six powerful horses, led for the purpose, and already harnessed, were, on the instant, linked to every gun; and away they went, bounding and clattering over the frozen soil at a hard gallop, while the fearless cavaliers formed front toward the host of Essex to cover their retreat, patiently waiting till the recaptured pieces had reached the royal lines. Then, with three regular cheers of triumph and derision, they filed off at a foot's pace, as if unwilling to return without exchanging shot or carbine or stroke of sword, even although victorious.

Another hour elapsed, and yet another, and still the armies held their stations steadily, face to face, neither advancing to attack, neither disposed to quit the field in presence of the other. Noon was already past, when a fresh movement was observed among the royalists near to the center of the army. But this time, as it seemed, no hostile measures were intended; for a white flag was suddenly advanced beyond the outposts of the army, and then, preceded by his trumpet, and followed by a glittering train of pursuivants, attired in their quartered tabards, Clarencieux, king-at-arms, refulgent in the blazoned pomp of heraldry, caracoled forth upon a snow-white palfrey, whose embroidered housings literally swept the ground. When it had almost

reached the advanced guards of the parliament, the gay procession halted, while its trumpets stirred the echoes of the slumbering hills with a long-flourished blast, calling the leaders of the host to a pacific parle. But, be their errand what it might, their summons called forth no emotion from the stern Puritans. No officer rode down to meet them; no peaceful symbol corresponding to their own was raised to greet them; no trumpet answered theirs, though thrice it brayed aloud, with notes of evident impatience. Wearied, at length, by the contemptuous silence which alone answered to his overtures, leaving his train where it had halted, the king-at-arms rode slowly, with a dubious air, as if but ill assured of safety, toward the nearest guard of horsemen, one pursuivant alone attending, and demanded to be led forthwith to the lord general; after brief ceremonial, the subaltern, detaching half a dozen men, escorted him along the line, requiring him emphatically, and with a glance toward the carbines of the guard, which rested upon their thighs, in readiness for instant service, to speak no word an' he would reach the general in life.

Nor was his greeting much more cordial when, after hurrying him, with small respect, along the serried ranks, the subaltern resigned him to an officer of Essex's lifeguard, who with the same stern discipline, conducted him toward the quarters of the brave though over-cautious nobleman who held the chief command. The general was mounted on his charger, with his leading-staff in hand, attired in a suit of beautiful half-armor, with a broad scarf of orange crossing his cuirass, and a feather of the like color drooping from his morion. The Earl of Bedford and Sir William Balfour were beside him, likewise on horseback; and some half dozen of his staff, with Colonels Hazlerig and Hampden, stood around, dismounted. Essex, with whom he had no personal acquaintance, looked full upon him without a word or sign of salutation; but Balfour, whom he knew, bowed slightly.

"I bear, so please you, my good Lord of Essex," the king-at-arms began, in nowise daunted by his cold reception, "I bear a gracious proclamation of his majesty, Charles, by the grace of God—"

"Hold, sir," cried Essex, in a sharp and angry tone,

"hold, sir — to whom bear you this message? Speak out, sir — and fall back, you loitering knaves! back with you all! back out of earshot!" as he perceived the troopers of his body-guard crowding a little forward, as if to mark what passed.

"Charles, by the grace of God —" continued the bold speaker, resuming, even where he had been before cut short, the thread of his discourse.

"To whom — to whom, I say, bear you this message?" exclaimed Essex, in tones of fierce excitement, the blood rushing in crimson to his brow. "To whom, save me, dare you bear any word?"

"To all," he answered, calmly — "to all men present here bear I his majesty's most merciful—"

"Silence, audacious!" thundered the general; "silence, if thou beest not aweary of thy life! Knowest thou not, William le Neve, knowest thou not, that for this breach of every law of war and nations I might cause thee hang? — hang like a dog upon the nearest tree, for all thy painted mummery! Away with him, sir," he continued, after a short pause, as if ashamed of his display of violence, addressing the officer who had escorted him, "away with him! — see him a hundred yards beyond our outposts; and if he do but breathe too loudly, shoot him upon the instant. I do profess," he added, turning again to the abashed and silent messenger, "I do profess to you, you have incurred a very fearful risk; but, that you may not lack an answer, say to your master that we have drawn our swords at bidding of the parliament, and in behalf of those ancestral liberties, which we will either transmit free and unfettered to our children, or lose together with our lives! — thou hast thine answer."

And with even more precaution than he had been admitted was he led back to join his followers by a stout squadron of the general's lifeguard, who, halting at some twenty yards from the confused and trembling pursuivants, deliberately blew their matches and levelled their short harquebusses! Startled at this manœuvre, it needed little—when the officer informed them, "That, an' they were not a full flight-shot on their route before three

minutes, he should fire a volley on them —" to send them at a furiôus gallop scattering toward the king's array.

This was the last attempt; and, ere an hour had elapsed, the guns and carriages of the king's host were drawn off by the road to Edgecot, his late quarters; and Essex, on beholding their retreat, was no less willing to lead away toward Warwick his wearied and disheartened army, abandoning thereby to Charles the access to the capital, which he had marched, and even risked a battle, to defend, whenever he should choose to profit by the errors of his enemy.

Scarce had the orders for this movement been delivered, before a trooper galloped up to Arden's post, gave him a packet, and, without waiting a reply, dashed spurs into his horse, and was already out of sight ere Edgar had discerned its purport. It was a mandate from the general in council, directing him to join his force to that of Colonel Cromwell, and place himself at once at his disposal; and he had hardly read it through when Oliver himself rode up.

"You have received," he said — "you have received already, as I see, those tidings, which, trusting that they may not be displeasing, and that so you be not rendered an unwilling instrument in this great cause, I have come hither to communicate. I am detached forthwith to march with mine own ironsides and with your gallant horse for Cambridge, thence to protect the safety of the eastern counties; and verily I do rejoice, for my soul sickeneth at coward councils; and, so long as we tarry here, we be not like, I trow, to meet with brave ones. Come with me, Edgar Arden, and I tell thee that we can achieve great things for the deliverance of this groaning land; yea! and work more for its regeneration, with our poor hundreds and the Lord's hand, which of a very deed shall smite on our side, frail vessels though we be and faithless, more to advance the liberties of England, than Essex with his tens of thousands!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOVE OF WOMAN.

"Not for my life! not though the hosts of heaven
Bend down their knees in suppliance at my feet,
And woo me to consent, shall one poor coin
Defile my palm of what is his by right—
His heritage—bequeathed i' the olden time
From honored sire to son, and last to him,
Most honored, who *should* heir it now; as free
As his great soul—and *shall*, by Heaven, for me!"

It was a sharp clear evening, some two months later than the undecided action of Edgehill, while both the armies were lying in their winter quarters — that of the king at Oxford, whither he had immediately retired after his treacherous violation of the truce at Brentford, and consequent repulse from London; that of the parliament in the metropolis and its vicinity—when a small group, composed of individuals the most discordant both in character and outward show, was gathered in the oriel parlor of the old manor-house of Woodleigh, affording to the eye a combination singular and picturesque.

Sir Henry Arden stood in the centre at the oaken table, on which a standish was displayed of massy silver, with implements for writing, and a long scroll of parchment, carefully engrossed, and decked with several broad seals to which, as it would seem, he was preparing to affix his signature. His figure, still erect and stately, was clad in a rich military suit of buff, splendidly laced with gold, booted, and spurred, and girt with the long rapier of the day; his snow-white locks hung down on either cheek, uncovered; but an attendant held in readiness for instant use his high-crowned beaver, with its drooping feather, and his sad-colored riding cloak. His noble features were knit firmly with an evident expression of resolve, although a teardrop might be seen to twinkle in his dark eye as he looked down upon his niece, groveling in the dust before him prostrate, and clinging to his knees, with her rich hair in its dishevelled volumes half covering her lovely form, with her hands clasped, her eyes uplifted to his

face, her lips apart but motionless, in agony of tearless supplication.

A hoary-headed servant watched, at an easy distance, the development of the sad scene, with every wrinkled feature telling of his affectionate concern; while a stout, stolid-looking yeoman, summoned, it might be, to attest a signature, lounged at his elbow, staring in rude indifference on the display of passions with which his boorish nature vainly sought to sympathize, and a small man, meanly clad in a black buckram doublet, with an inkhorn and a penknife in lieu of weapons at his girdle, of an expression impudently sly and knavish, was the last person of the group within the manor. But without, plainly to be discovered from the casements, there was assembled a fair company of horsemen, gayly equipped in the bright fluttering garb affected by the cavaliers, with the old banner of the house of Arden unfurled and streaming to the wintry wind, and a groom leading to and fro the favorite charger of the head of that honored name.

"No! no!" cried Sibyl, in tones that quivered with excitement till they were barely audible, resisting the slight force which the old man put forth to raise her — "no! no! I will not rise. Here! here at your feet will I remain till I prevail in my entreaty! Oh, you were wont to be wise, generous, and just! Temperate in your youth, as I have heard them tell, and calm — be then yourself, my noble uncle, be then once more yourself, nor sully, by this deed of unconsidered rashness, a whole long life of wisdom and of honor."

"It may not be," he answered, quietly, though not without an effort, as he compelled her to arise — "it may not be. The time allotted to our race hath now run out! — the house of Arden is extinct with the old miserable man who stands before you! — The lands that have been subject to my name for centuries shall never know it more! The Lord gave — the Lord hath taken away — blessed be the name of the Lord! But would — oh, would to Heaven that *his* corpse had mouldered on some foreign battle-field — that his bones had been entombed deep in the caverns of the sea — that he had died by any death, how terrible soever — that he had dragged out any life,

however wretched and intolerable! Better, far better had it been so to have mourned for him, than to have seen him thus — a blot — a single blot — on an unblemished name! a traitor to his king — a foeman to his country — a curse to him from whom he drew his being! No! plead to me no more; for never, never shall a traitor — a fanatic and hypocrite traitor — inherit anything from me save the high name he hath disgraced. I have — and I bless Heaven that I have it — through his own act of treason, the right to sunder this entail, and sundered shall it be ere sunset! He hath no corner of my heart — no jot of mine affections; himself he hath cut out his path, and — rue it as he may — by that path must he travel now unto the end — dishonored — outcast — disinherited — accur—"

"Oh, no, no, no!" she shrieked, in frantic tones, drowning his utterance of a word so terrible when coming from a parent's lips; "curse him not! — curse him not! or never shall you taste of peace again. Father, curse not your son — your firstborn, and your only! Sinner, curse not your fellow! Christian, curse not a soul, whose hopes are your hopes also! Curse not, but pray! — pray — not for your erring child — but for your rash and sinful self! Pray, uncle, pray for penitence and pardon!"

Affected somewhat by her words, but yet more by the fearful energy of her demeanor than by the tenor of her speech, Sir Henry paused; but not to doubt, much less to bend from his revengeful policy.

"In so far, at the least, fair niece; in so far, at the least," he said, with a smile evidently forced and painful, "you have the right of it. 'Tis neither christianlike to curse, nor manly. But to this gear, good Master Sexby," he continued, turning to the lawyer, who had gazed with hardened coldness on the affecting scene; "this deed, you tell me, is complete and firm in all the technicalities?"

"As strong as law can render it, Sir Henry," returned the mean attorney, "else know I nothing of mine own profession. Since Master Arden being last of the entail, and now declared a traitor by proclamation of his majesty at Oxford, could scarce inherit, even without this deed of settlement on Mistress Sibyl and her heirs—"

"Never!" she answered, in a calm, low voice, the more

peculiar from its contrast to the fiery vehemence she had before displayed; "never will I receive the smallest share, the least particular of that which is another's—that other Edgar Arden's, too!—though I should perish of starvation — never! And heirs — what tell you *me* of heirs? Think you that *I*—I, the affianced bride of such a man — would deign to cast myself away on his inferior — and who, that is human, is not inferior? — No, no! your testament is nothing worth. Heirless will I die, or die the wife of Arden! What, then, avail your crafts and subtleties of law? I spurn their false and fickle toils before me, as the free hawk would rive asunder with his unfettered wing the trammels of the spider's web!"

"Peace! for your fame's sake, peace! degenerate girl," the old man sternly answered; "would you disclose to these your miserable weakness — "

"To these? To every dweller of the universal earth would I avow the strength, the constancy, the immortality of my legitimate and hallowed love. Affianced in my youth, by yourself affianced, to one whom both my reason and my heart prefer, why should I shrink to own it? Weakness? — I tell you, uncle, that I am no whit less strong — nay, ten times stronger than yourself — in faith, in loyalty, in conscience, in resolve. If I may not approve his actions — and of a truth I do not — I may not but revere his motives. And if those actions must half sever the strong links that join us, and render me for very conscience' sake a widowed maiden, his motives, pure, and sincere, and fervent as an angel's faith, shall at the least forbid me to misjudge, much more to wrong him. Weakness? — I tell you I adore him — adore him even more for this his constancy to what *he* deems the better cause, when every fibre of his heart is tugging him to the other — when loss of name, and fame, and fortune must be the guerdon of his unflinching and severe devotion to a mistaken creed! Yet, deeply, singly as I love him, never will I wed Edgar Arden while he unsheathes a rebel blade or prompts a rebel council. I tell you I adore him, yet will I die a maiden! unless—" and she paused, for a space, in her most eloquent appeal, as if to mark what influence it might have

had upon the mind of her stern relative — "unless, by this your madness, you drive me to do that my conscience shrinks from. Suffer your broad lands to descend to him who justly inherits them, and rest assured that sooner will I die than marry with a rebel! Leave them to me—as in the madness of your passion you propose—leave them to me, and instantly will I make restitution to the rightful owner, if by no other means, at least by sacrifice of mine own conscience, mine own person!"

"Go to! you will *not*, Sibyl!" exclaimed the old man, vehemently; "I know you better than you know yourself. You would not do so, were things a thousand times more precious than these miserable lands dependent on your action!"

"And wherefore not?" she cried; "have I not, at the dictates of my conscience, cast from me the affections of the warmest and the highest heart that ever beat for woman? Have I not sacrificed unto my sense of loyalty — a sense, perchance, fantastic or mistaken — my every hope of happiness on earth? And wherefore shall I not obey the voice of the same counsellor, and to a sacrifice less grievous? Think you the love of justice is a less eloquent or weaker advocate than the mere love of kings? But, since you may not be convinced by argument, nor won by any pleading, hear me then swear, and hear me THOU," she added, solemnly turning upward her bright eyes, flashing with strong excitement, and dilated far beyond their wonted size — "that sittest on the wings of cherubim — Thou that hast no regard for kings, nor any trust in princes, receive my vow!" She paused an instant, as if to re-collect her energies, and as she paused a deep voice broke the silence—

"Swear not, my gentle cousin," said the slow, harmonious voice; "and, above all, swear not for me!"

Instantly every eye was turned in the direction whence sounded those unusual accents; and in the sight of all, upon the threshold of the open door, there stood a tall and stately figure, wrapped in a horseman's cloak of some dark color, and wearing a slouched hat and falling plume, which veiled effectually, in that dim, uncertain light, the

features of the speaker; but their concealment mattered not, for every heart at once, and, as it were, instinctively, knew Edgar Arden, whose arrival, with the slight bustle that accompanied it, had passed unnoticed during the all-engrossing interest of the scene in which those present were engaged.

"Swear not in my behalf, dear Sibyl," he continued, doffing his high-crowned beaver, and displaying his fine lineaments, haggard and pale from violent emotion, "nor, if you love me, thwart my father's will. In good time, I perceive, have I come hither, since something of this purpose reached my ears ere you beheld my presence—"

"And wherefore," his father fiercely interrupted him, laying his hand upon his rapier's hilt — "wherefore have you presumed, traitor and villain, thus to defile these honorable halls with the pollution of your footsteps? Have you come sword in hand, leading your canting and psalm-singing hypocrites, to spoil, and slay, and lead into captivity? or have you come, forsooth, with oily words and a God-fearing countenance, to preach to the old man the error of his ways, that he too may unsheath the sword of Gideon, and go down with the chosen of the Lord to strive against the Philistines in Gigal! Such is the style of your new comrades, and thou canst mouth it with the best of them, I warrant me! Canst thou not preach and pray? canst thou not quote the Scriptures of the Lord to justify the doings of the devil?"

"For none of these things have I come, my father," he replied, in sad and humble tones, sinking upon his knee, "nor yet for anything that may offend or grieve you. Hear me, I do beseech you;" for, by the angry gesture of Sir Henry, he perceived that his speech was like to be cut short — "hear me but for a short while, and I will cease to pain you with my presence."

"Be it, then, for a short while," answered the other, nothing mollified by the calm patience of his son, "if be it must at all—as I suppose it *must*, for I can well believe that you have some five hundred fighting men of the saints to back you, else had you never ventured hither. Let it be for a short while, sirrah, for even now I look

to see the roof-tree of my father's house topple and crush the wretch that has brought infamy on all it shelters!"

"Not a soldier, not a follower, not a groom," said Edgar, sorrowfully rising, "though I look not that you will credit me, is with me, nor yet within ten miles of Woodleigh. Alone I have come hither, once more to say adieu, and crave — what I have nothing done to forfeit — a father's blessing!"

"'Tis well," Sir Henry interrupted him in a cold strain of the most cutting irony ere he had fully ended, "excellent well, indeed! So get you on with what you have to *say*, as I in turn will presently *do* somewhat. Anthony, get you hence and fetch us lights; it hath grown dark betimes; and you, good Master Hughson," he continued, turning toward the yeoman, "will wait our leisure in the buttery. Now!—get you on, son Edgar."

"I did hope," sadly replied the partisan, "that your resentment, sir, had in so far abated that you might have endured without disgust my passing visit. To offer you the reasons for my conduct were, in your present mood, I fear, of no avail: suffice it, therefore, to inform you that, though I may lose much, I can gain nothing by the part I have espoused; that neither power, nor place, nor bribe of woman's love, nor proffered rank, nor yet the baser meed of gold, hath tempted me; that neither gift nor guerdon will recompense my service, nor aught else save the inward quiet of an innocent heart, and the most high approval of Him who can alone interpret it. But of this enough. This deed, if I mistake not, which now but waits your signature, is destined to deprive me of my heritage. My father, as the last save me in the entail, and I proclaimed a traitor," he continued, turning toward the lawyer, "hath, as you deem it, the power to alienate this property. Hold! interrupt me not; it may be that he hath — provided always that the party which proclaimed me traitor shall come off victorious in the end, and the master! If not, your deed is nothing. But think not" — and he turned again toward his father — "think not, I do beseech you, sir, that I would for one moment condescend so to inherit what you would not

that I should possess. Annul this futile deed, and I, the last in tail, will join with you to sever that entail for ever! Let this man execute the papers, and, whensoever needed, my signature shall be forthcoming. So, whether king or commons win the day, shall you be sole disposer of your broad possessions. The son whom you abhor would freely barter all for one short word of kindness — for one last blessing from a father, at whose command how gladly would he sacrifice all, save his conscience and his honor!"

"I take you at your proffer," rejoined the baronet, without one symptom of relenting in his hard eye, without one sign of soft or kind emotion at the devoted generosity of his discarded son; "base knaves although they be with whom you have descended to consort, I can rejoice you have not lost *all* your nobility of soul. I take you at your proffer. Affix your signature and seal to this blank parchment; for it may well be we shall never meet again; and here I pledge to you my knightly word of honor that it shall be applied as you have said, and to no other end."

A large tear stood on either cheek of Edgar, as, with a steady hand, and firm though darkened countenance, he signed his name in bold, free characters, and so surrendered for himself and for his heirs the title to that noble patrimony which for so many ages had been graced by the high virtues of his ancestry. But the tear flowed not, nor was the brow overcast for any selfish thought—by any sorrow for the wealth thus forfeited—by any fond regret for the old home of happier days thus lost forever. At other times such feelings would have, perhaps, been busy at his heart — would have, perhaps, excluded every other sentiment. Now it was the coldness of the father's tone, the stern and firm resolve of hatred which had possessed the father's heart, that clouded the broad forehead of the son and dimmed his eye. Quietly he replaced the pen upon the standish, and again sinking on his knee, "Father," he said, in faltering and husky tones, "I never yet, save in this one respect, have disobeyed or grieved you; your blessing, oh my father!"

"My blessing to a rebel, to a hypocrite, a traitor! —

not though my life should pay for my refusal!" thundered the pitiless old cavalier. "Be grateful that I curse you not! be grateful, not to me, but to yon pale and suffering angel, whom your false villainy hath blighted, for she alone withholds it! Begone! — why tarry you? Begone, and never let me look upon you more! Begone, an outcast from my heart forever!"

For a minute's space he stood, fixed as the eldest-born of Niobe, pierced by the arrow of the vengeful god — pale, motionless, and voiceless. The wretched girl had sunk, at the last fearful words, mercifully deprived, for a short space, of sentiment and reason; his father stood between them, with flashing eyes and arms extended, as if he wanted but a pretext to launch upon his head the awful terrors of a paternal curse. It was but for a minute that he stood doubtful and unresolved; his pulse beat hurriedly, his sinews quivered, his lip paled with anguish — yet in one little minute was the paroxysm ended. "Bless you, my father, bless you!" he exclaimed, in piteous and heartrending tones; "may the great Ruler of the universe protect and bless you! Oh, may *you* never know the anguish you have this day heaped, fiercer than the coals of fire, on the heart of a despairing son! Farewell—farewell!"

He turned, and, ere a word could be pronounced, a motion made to intercept him, vanished into the darkness of the hall. Then, and not till then, did the hot anger of the old man's heart relent. "Edgar," he gasped, in faint and faltering tones, "my boy—my boy!" but so low was the intonation of his voice that it reached not the ears of him who would have welcomed those half-uttered words even as a voice, from heaven. The aged servant who had watched the scene in silent anguish, sprang forth as to recall him — but again it was too late.

The angry clatter of his horse's hoofs upon the pavement of the court alone announced the keenness of the goad that rankled in the bosom of the rider; and ere an effort could be made to overtake his flight, the demon pride had once more gained ascendency, and with a darker frown and colder accents than before, Sir Henry

now forbade all farther care; consigned his hapless niece to her attendants; gave brief directions to the lawyer for the fulfillment of his cruel policy; mounted his horse and rode away, self-satisfied and stern, through the chill darkness of the wintry night, to join the king at Oxford, ere he should raise the standard for his second sad campaign.

CHAPTER V.

WINSLEY FIELD.

Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now
Fired was each eye and flush'd each brow.
On either side loud clamors ring—
'God and the cause'—'God and the king'—
Right English all, they rush'd to blows
With naught to win and all to lose.
I could have laugh'd—but lack the time—
To see, in phrenesy sublime,
How the fierce zealots fought and bled
For king or state, as humor led.

SCOTT'S *Rokeby*.

THE winter had already passed away, and with it every hope of present reconciliation between the monarch and his parliament. Early in March the royal hosts were in the field, one in the western counties, commanded by the king in person, and the most dashing of his generals, impetuous Rupert; another in the north, under the gallant Newcastle, the noblest gentleman and most accomplished soldier who fought beneath the banners of his sovereign. During the first months of the year the tide of fortune had flowed constantly in favor of the cavaliers. In March, a desperate action, fought upon Hopton Heath, near Stafford, had made small compensation to the parliament, by the death of brave Northampton, for the defeat of Gell and Brereton. Rupert had taken Cirencester, treating his captives with unmanly and relentless cruelty; and, shortly afterward, in the same sort had captured and half burnt the flourishing and wealthy town of

Birmingham. Nor had the occupation of Reading by the Earl of Essex brought anything except disaster and disease upon its captors. A dangerous conspiracy had broken out among the Puritans, and, though suppressed and punished by the deaths of the two Hothams, Challoner, and Tompkins, had yet led many to believe that seeds of discord were already sown among the democratic party, which would ere long destroy their unanimity forever. A heavier and more fatal loss befell, not his own party merely, but the whole realm of England, in the untimely death of Hampden, mortally wounded in a trivial skirmish upon Chalgrove field in Buckingham; he died, as he had lived, a patriot, a martyr to the cause of freedom; his last breath, ere he rendered up his spirit to his Maker, expended in a prayer for his oppressed and bleeding country.

Nor had the partisans of liberty fared much more hopefully in the north; Sir Thomas Fairfax, after a short but unsuccessful stand against the Marquis of Newcastle on Atherton Moor, was compelled to retreat before his victors, who pressed on with much energy and vigor to recover Gainsborough, which had been stormed and garrisoned by the Lord Willoughby upon the parliament's behalf. In this important aim they scarcely could have failed, had not the leader of the ironsides with his brave cavalry, augmented in their numbers to full two thousand men by Arden's junction, having already greatly signalized himself by the defeat of a superior force of royalists before the walls of Grantham, and by the storm of Burleigh house and Stamford, gallantly interposed between the town and Newcastle's advance.

The enemy, amounting to above three times his number, under Lieutenant-general Cavendish, the brother of the marquis, flushed with their late success, composed of picked men for the most, officered by gentlemen of equal gallantry and rank, and animated by the highest spirit of loyal bravery, had occupied a station so commanding that they could only be assailed by passing through a gateway, and charging up a steep acclivity. Yet not for this did Cromwell hesitate an instant; but, personally leading on his troopers, he resolutely rushed upon them, and, after a

brisk conflict, routed them utterly, forcing them from their position into a deep morass, and killing Cavendish, with most of their superior officers.

Burning for vengeance, the main body of the royalists, neglecting Gainsborough, pushed on, and with such overwhelming numbers that Cromwell was compelled to fall back first on Lincoln, and thence immediately on Boston, uniting there his forces with the army of the Earl of Manchester, whom he had been appointed with all speed to reinforce, as second in command to that staunch nobleman. Upon this point Newcastle marched, eager for battle, and desirous to engage, before the host of Manchester should be increased by new accessions, which, as he learned, were swelling day by day his ranks; having detached Sir John Henderson, an old and well-proved soldier, in advance, with eighty-seven troops, horse and dragoons, to seek out Cromwell, and bring him, ere the earl could aid him with his infantry, to action at a disadvantage.

It was a glorious morning in the latter part of June, and at an hour so early that the heavy dews of summer were yet hanging unexhaled on wold and woodland, although the sun had lifted his broad disk above the horizon, when the two armies came in view on Winsley field, near Horncastle. It was a gallant and a graceful spectacle as ever met the eye of man.

The scene a broad and waving tract of moorish meadow land, checkered with many a patch of feathery coppice, birch, ash, and alder, tufts of furze full of its golden bloom, and waving fern, and here and there a bare gray rock peering above the soil, or a clear pool of water reflecting the white clouds that hung aloft all motionless in the blue firmament; and over this romantic champaign there might be seen manœuvering a magnificent array of horse, four thousand at the least in numbers, contracting or extending their bright squadrons, now closing up into column and now deploying into line, as best they might among the obstacles of this their battle-ground. Their polished armor and their many colored scarfs now flashed out vividly as the sunshine kissed their masses with its golden light, now sobered into mellower hues as some great cloud

would flit across the sky and cast its sweeping shadow over them. Their trumpets ever and anon wakened the echoes of the woodlands, that surrounded them on every side, with their exulting notes, and their gay standards fluttered in the breeze. Their gallant chargers arched their necks against the curb, bounded and curvetted along as if they panted for the onset; while toward the eastern limits of the plain, upon a gentle elevation, flanked on the one side by the gully of a deep and stony brook, and on the other by a coppice, tangled with ancient thorns, and matted with wild rose briers, which protected likewise the whole rear of his position, Cromwell had formed his line.

Nor, though inferior far in numbers, and lacking all that chivalrous and splendid decoration which their floating plumes and gorgeous dresses lent to the cavaliers, could his dark squadrons have been looked upon without attention, ay! and admiration also, by the most unromantic of observers. The admirable discipline and perfect armature of the stern zealots who composed the ranks, the plain but soldierly and bright accoutrements, the horses, superior even to the chargers of the royalists in blood and bone and beauty, and, above all, in that precise and jealous grooming, without which all the rest are little worth, the grim and stubborn countenances of the riders, some animated with a fiery zeal that would have smiled exultingly upon the stake of martyrdom, some lowering with a dark and sullen scowl, but all severe and resolute and dauntless. A single glance sufficed to tell that every battle-field to them must be a triumph or a grave.

Silent they stood and motionless, their long array drawn up, two deep, by squadrons at brief intervals, solemn and voiceless, presenting a strange contrast to the shifting movements and the intricate manœuvres of their approaching enemy. Not a man moved in his saddle, not a sound broke the quiet of their discipline, save now and then the stamp and neigh of an unruly charger, or the sharp clatter of his steel caparison.

And now the cavaliers, within a short mile's distance, having already cleared the broken ground, might be seen halting on the farther verge of the smooth space which

swept away toward them in a gentle slope, unmarred by bush, or brake, or obstacle of any kind to the career of the most timid rider; when, with some three or four of his most trusty captains, Cromwell advanced before his lines. Of stout, ungainly stature when dismounted, none showed to more advantage on his warhorse, and in full caparison of battle, than did the colonel of the ironsides. It was not that his seat was graceful, or that he ruled his charger with the ease of the manêge, but that he swayed him with an absolute dominion, which seemed to arise rather from his mere volition than from the exercise of strength or skill. His whole soul seemed engrossed by the approaching conflict, careless of self, exalted, and enthusiastical. His eyes flashed with a brightness almost supernatural from the dark shadow of his morion, and his whole visage wore an aspect so irradiate with energy and mind, that Edgar wondered how he ever could have deemed him ill-favored or ungraceful.

His horse, a superb black, bore him as if he too were conscious of Divine authority; and such was the commanding greatness of his whole appearance, that no human eye could have descended to remark the plainness of his war array. Of the small group of officers, who rode beside the bridle of their leader, the most were ordinary looking men, burghers of Huntingdon, or small esquires of the surrounding country, selected for the stations which they occupied, by the wise politician who had levied them, on account of those morose and gloomy tenets which, with an early prescience, he discovered to be the only power that might cope with the high spirit of the gentlemen who formed the bulk of their antagonists. These were the men who affected or imagined visions and transports; who believed themselves predestined instruments, and deemed that in the slaying of malignants they were doing an especial service to the God whose chosen servants they declared themselves, with a faith in the truth of the assertion which rendered them almost invincible.

Among these plain and heavy looking soldiers, the form of Arden—high born, and full of the intuitive and untaught grace of noble blood, gallantly armed and hand-

somely attired, for he was not one of those who fancied that the approbation of Heaven could be won by a rusty corslet or an ill-blacked boot, mounted on a dark chestnut horse, thorough bred, yet powerful enough to bear a man-at-arms fully accoutred through the longest day—showed like a glorious falcon among a tribe of buzzards. Yet even he, handsome and young and fairly clad, filled not the eye like the majestic person of his colonel. At a quick trot they swept along the lines, inspecting their array, with now a word of commendation, and now a short reproof, to the dark fanatics who had been chosen lance-spesades or sergeants for their savage and enthusiastic humor. Just as they finished their career, a long and cheery shout, accompanied and blended with the clang of kettle-drums and the shrill flourish of trumpets, burst from the columns of the cavaliers, now wheeling into line and eager for the onset.

No shout or burst of instruments replied from the parliamentarians; but their leader, at the sound, checking his charger from his speed till he reared bolt upright, threw forth his arm with a proud gesture of defiance; "Brethren," he called aloud, in accents harsh but clearly audible, and thrilling to the heart—"Brethren and fellow-soldiers in the Lord, the men of Belial are before you, the persecutors of the saints, the spillers of the innocent blood, godless and desperate, slayers of babes and sucklings, ravishers of maids and matrons, revilers of the prophets and the law, accursed of the Lord Jehovah! Wherefore, faint not, nor be of feeble heart, for surely on this day shall the Lord yield them up into your hands, that ye may work his vengeance on their heads, and execute his judgments. For said he not of old, 'Lo! I will tread them in my anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come!' So saith the Lord of Hosts. Amen! amen! Selah!"

And, with a deep and solemn hum, the Puritans took up the words—"So saith the Lord of Hosts. Amen! amen! Selah!"

"And are not we," continued the fierce zealot, with

increasing energy—"and are not we—blinded although we be, and ignorant and sinful—I ask ye, brethren, are not we the chosen of the lord, and shall we not obey his bidding? Smite them, then—smite the idolatrous besotted followers of the old Antichrist, even as just Elijah slew the priests of Baal down at the brook of Kishon. Be strong and fear ye not! For lo! the Lord hath said, 'Ye shall not suffer one of them to live!' and who are we that we should now gainsay the bidding of the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts? Lift up your voices, then, that yon malignants may perceive in whom we put our trust."

Again, and in a sterner and more heartfelt shout, the approbation of the Puritans greeted their leader's ears; and as he ceased, with brandished blades and inflamed features, and with voices that drowned utterly the feebler music of the cavaliers, already confident of victory and maddened with religious zeal, they thundered forth their favorite hymn.

"What saith the God of battles, the mighty Lord of Hosts?
'Ye shall prevail against them, though loud their Godless boasts!
Ye shall destroy them utterly, and root them from the land,
For I will give ye strength, and edge your battle brand!

"'At the rebuke of one, shall mighty thousands fly,
For I have heard my people's prayer, their sad and grievous cry!
And I will raise my glorious voice, that it be heard afar,
And show the lightning of my hand—my right hand—in the war.

"'Wo unto them that put their trust in the Egyptian's crown—
His chariots and his horsemen, his power and his renown!
The Egyptian he is man—not God—in whom they put their trust;
His horses are not spirit, but frail and fleeting dust!

"'When I stretch out my hand, together they shall fall,
The helper and the holpen—yea! they shall perish all!
Of old ordain'd was Tophet; for the king it was made hot,
As thorns that in the furnace blaze or briers beneath the pot!

"'But ye—ye are my people—the ransom'd of my soul!
Glory shall be your heritage, Jerusalem your goal!
And the sceptre shall not leave ye, and the crown shall not depart
From the faithful house of Judah—from the chosen of my heart!'"

The fierce strains ceased, and a loud conclamation followed them, solemnly breathing a sublime, yet savage spirit of defiance, and was responded to immediately by the huzzahs of the advancing cavaliers, and the rich

symphonies of horn and kettle-drum. A small reserve of some five hundred men was posted in the rear, and, in one mighty line, the rest swept forward at a brisk trot, the front rank with their carbines all unslung and matches lighted. Cromwell gazed steadfastly upon them for an instant; then his eye lightened and his lip curled scornfully as he addressed his second in command. "Lieutenant-colonel Arden," he exclaimed, "dismount two hundred of our best dragooners, and, under Fight-the-good-fight Egerton, let them file down that gully to our left, and fire constantly on the advance of these misproud malignants." Without a moment's pause the order was transmitted and obeyed, and, ere five minutes had elapsed, the party was detached and scrambling down the rocky bed of the ravine, unnoted by the royalists, under the guidance of as morose and bold a Puritan as ever levelled musket or misquoted holy writ. "Sir Edmund Winthrop," Oliver continued, "your stout major, shall hold your regiment, as our reserve, here on this ground of vantage; but shall not stir from it unless at your command or mine. We will not tarry for their charge, but meet them horse to horse, in onset of alternate squadrons. I lead the first division, you shall support me with the second. When you shall hear my bugle sound a recall and rally, then strike in, and the Lord strike with you. 'Truth' is our word and 'Peace.' Amen! Selah!"

Even as he spoke, the royalists gave fire from their first rank, but at too great a distance to do execution, and halted to reload. "Steady, men!" shouted Cromwell, whose sword was not yet drawn, from the extreme right, as he perceived a demonstration of anxiety to charge among his troopers — "steady, men; let them come nigher, and when they fire again, shoot also ye, upon their flash, through your whole line; and instantly, alternate squadrons from the left, charge on them ere they may reload!"

Scarce had he ended ere the line again advanced on a hard trot; a single shot rang from the gulley, broken and fringed with thorns and alder-bushes; another, and another; a rapid and continuous fire of skirmishers, picking off half a score of officers, and throwing the right wing

of the royalists into some slight confusion. On, however, they still came, their banners rustling, and their gay plumes and baldrics fluttering in the wind, while, trusting to make such impression on the main host of the Puritans as should cause their ambuscade to be of no effect, they hurried to the onset. On they came, resolute and dauntless. Their bugle sounded for the gallop—for the charge! and, at the latter call, again the levelled carbines rose to the riders' cheeks; a bright flash ran along their line, and a dense veil of smoke covered their orderly and brilliant front. Before it cleared away, the scattering volley of the Puritans, poured in with a deliberate aim, made fearful havoc in their ranks, and on the instant, casting aside their matchlocks and whirling their long rapiers from the scabbards, one half the squadrons of the parliament hurled themselves furiously upon the advancing foe. Eagerly, anxiously did Edgar gaze upon the charge. On went the colonel of the ironsides, three horses' length in front of his division, and all as gallantly out dashed a leader of the king's to meet him. They met, and it was but an instant ere the charger of the royalist ran masterless, and its unhappy owner rolled, weltering in his blood, beneath the trampling hoofs of the fierce Puritans. There was no faltering, no doubt in either line; forward they rushed, all straining to the charge, their horses foaming and struggling against the bit, and their swords flashing in the sunlight. Edgar unsheathed his rapier, for now a horse's length scarce intervened; yet neither host had paused nor turned aside. And now they were encountering, when the front rank of the cavaliers threw in with desperate execution their reserved volley, shaking the line of the parliamentarians like an earthquake, emptying scores of saddles, and hurling riders and horses headlong to the earth. The smoky curtain once again swept over them; it cleared away, and Arden saw his fellow-troopers, unbroken and in close array, so orderly had they closed in above the falling, now mingled hand to hand, and fighting with the cavaliers, whose front was bending like a bow; the points on which the troops of Oliver had charged, beat backward a full pistol-shot, and the alternate squadrons which had met no foe wavering

and undecided what to do. Sword cuts were glancing through the air on helm and corslet; pistol-shots flashed among the melée; and the shouts, "God and the church" — "God and the king," blended with groans, and yells, and curses, and the clash of blades, and the wild blast of trumpets, pealed dissonantly to the sky. Still Cromwell's bugle sounded not, nor were his men drawn off; and Arden paused in doubt. His eye fell suddenly upon the form of Oliver fighting among the foremost; another volley from a small knot of cavaliers, down he went, horse and man, and the strife closed more fiercely round him; at the same instant the reserve of Henderson moved up to reinforce his battle.

Then Edgar paused no longer — "Forward!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder — "forward — charge home!" and dashing down the grassy slope, before a minute passed, he burst like a thunderbolt upon the unengaged divisions of the enemy, and, killing two men with his own hand, drove them in terrible confusion, by the fury of his onset, back on their own reserve. Turning his eye, so soon as he had gained a moment's leisure, toward the spot where he had seen his colonel fall, he caught a glimpse of him on foot, fighting with desperate courage against some six or seven horsemen, who were hewing at him all together with their long broadswords, and hindering each other by their own impetuosity. Three strokes of his good sword, and the superb exertions of his charger, placed him at Cromwell's side just as he fell to the earth, stunned but unwounded by a heavy blow. One of the cavaliers received the point of Edgar's rapier in his throat before he checked his horse; the others were engaged and beaten backward by the foremost of his troopers. Hastily springing to the ground as Oliver regained his feet, "Mount," he exclaimed, "mount, Colonel Cromwell, on my horse, and finish what so well you have begun!"

Without a word the zealot leaped to the saddle, cast his eyes with a quick, comprehensive glance around him, and read the fortunes of the day upon the instant.

"They are half beaten now," he shouted in exulting tones; "one charge more, and we sweep them like dust

before the winds of heaven! Away, sir; down with the reserve, and fall upon their left flank. I will draw off my men, and ere you be in action, will be prepared to give it them again in front. Ho! bugler," he continued, as Arden, mounting his brown mare, which his equerry had led up, gallopped off swiftly to the rear; "ho! bugler, sound me a recall and rally!" The shrill notes of the instrument rang aloud above the din of battle; and with that strict obedience for which they had already gained repute, the ironsides drew off from the encounter orderly, and beautifully formed again, before the shattered and disordered masses of the cavaliers had fallen into any semblance of array. In the meantime Arden had reached his regiment, the men burning to emulate the glory half achieved by their companions, the horses pawing the turf, and snorting with impatience.

A loud shout greeted him as he addressed them, in a few words terse and full of fire, formed them by troops in open column, and advanced between the coppice on his right and the extreme left of the enemy, now near a quarter of a mile pushed forward beyond their right and centre, which had been most disordered by the fire of the skirmishers and Cromwell's furious charge. So great, indeed, was the confusion of the royalists, their officers toiling along the ranks, laboring with oaths, and menaces, and exhortations to rally and re-form the men, that they perceived not Arden's movement till he was wheeling into line to the left previous to charging them. Then, when it was too late, they struggled to redeem their error nobly but fruitlessly; for, ere they could show front against him, the trumpets sounded, Oliver's in front, and Edgar's on the flank, and simultaneously they were charged, broken, and dispersed.

The action was over in an instant; but the rout, the flight, the havoc, the despair, the hideous, indiscriminating massacre, urged to the utmost by religious fury and political rancor, ceased not till noon; when Cromwell's bugles, slowly and most reluctantly obeyed, called back the men, their weapons blunted and their arms aweary, but their hearts insatiate of carnage, from the hard-pressed pursuit.

CHAPTER VI.

MARSTON MOOR.

Upon the bloody field
The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
Hurling against our spears a line
Of gallants fiery as their wine;
Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
In zeal's despite began to reel."
* * * * * *
Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,
And conquest bless'd the rightful side.

SCOTT'S *Rokeby*.

THOUGH but of brief duration and trifling magnitude as to the number of the troops engaged on either hand, yet was the victory of Cromwell upon Winsley field of vast importance, when considered in its bearings on the general aspect of the war. By it only was the Marquis of Newcastle prevented from coöperating with the royal forces in the west, when, elevated as they were in spirit by the defeat of Waller upon Roundway Down, and the disgraceful fall of Bristol, they might too probably have marched triumphantly to the metropolis, had they been reinforced as they expected, by the northern chivalry. In consequence of this repulse, then, Newcastle sat down before the walls of Hull, while Charles, thus disappointed in his schemes, as fatally laid siege to Gloucester, which he was soon compelled to raise by the activity of Essex. The desperate drawn battle before Newbury ensued, noted for nothing but the death of the good Falkland, the only counsellor that now remained about the king who could be deemed a patriot or a true lover of the English constitution. The Hampden of the royalists, this gallant nobleman fell with his country's name the last sound on his lips; but fell not till he had become aweary of a life which was embittered so by the disasters of his native land, that he was wont to sink, even when circled by the gayest of his friends, into desponding apathy, and "to in-

geminate, after deep silence and continual sighs, with a shrill, sad accent, the words 'Peace—peace!'"

The winter which succeeded was by the cavaliers spun out in feuds, dissensions, and intrigues among themselves, the king remaining obstinately bent on prostrating all opposition to his will, and countenancing such alone of his advisers as urged the fiercest and most downright measures. Not so the parliament at Westminster, in which the Independent party were, by the death of Hampden first, and afterward of Pym, gaining an ascendency which was increased daily through the abilities of Cromwell, St. John, and the younger Vane, the leading politicians and debaters of the lower house. The energy and deep-laid shrewdness of these men suffered not one false step, however trivial, on the part of Charles, to pass unnoted or unimproved to their advantage; and, ere the spring was far enough advanced for the commencement of a third campaign, they had so thoroughly aroused the spirit of the land, inflamed already by the king's impolitic and shameful treaty with the rebellious Catholics of Ireland, that, early in the month of March, five several armies were on foot. Essex was preparing to oppose the king in person; Waller commanded in the west; the Scotch, who had invaded England in accordance with the solemn league and covenant, and Fairfax, with his Yorkshire levies, had shut up Newcastle in York; and Manchester, with Cromwell's horse, was hurrying from the associated counties of the east toward the same important point.

And now, for the first time since the commencement of the war, did fortune show herself in favor of the liberal party; the total and complete annihilation of Lord Hopton's force at Alresford by Waller, was in itself sufficient to compel even Charles to give up all attempt at a campaign on the offensive. Nor was this all; for Newcastle's express advised him that he must surrender unless succored in the brief space of three weeks. It was on this intelligence that Rupert, having achieved much reputation and some eminent successes in that large county, marched out of Lancashire with all the flower of the royalists, drawn from the midland counties, burning

with gallant ardor, confident in their successful leader, appointed with a noble train of ordnance, and reinforced by Goring's excellent brigade of horse from Lincolnshire, hastening ably, and no less fortunately, to the relief of York, reduced already to extremity, and on the point of yielding to the parliament.

During the dark and melancholy winter which had thus elapsed, Arden, in close attendance on his duties, whether civil in the house at Westminster, or active in the field, had struggled, with more of steadiness than of success, to banish from his heart the recollection of his own depressed and well-nigh hopeless circumstances. Of his implacable and stubborn father he had heard but little since their last interview at Woodleigh, save that a copy of the document for securing the estates to Sibyl and breaking the entail had been transmitted to him for inspection; and that a rumor, as it proved well founded, had reached London that the old baronet, having been strenuous and incessant in stimulating warlike measures, had left Oxford in the dead of winter, dismantled his fine residence, and thrown himself, together with his niece, into the capital of Yorkshire, some short time only before it was invested by the united troops of Fairfax and the Earl of Leven.

Such was the state of matters, when, on a lovely evening of July, some few days after the strong succors under Manchester and Cromwell had joined the northern army, Edgar returned from a reconnaissance which he had been sent to execute, with his whole regiment, in consequence of rumors that the cavaliers had been observed in force toward the neighboring towns of Wetherby and Bramham. During the two days which had been consumed in scouring thoroughly that district of the country, he had discovered nothing to justify, in any sort, the vague reports which had prevailed ere his departure from the camp; and it was therefore much to his amazement that he perceived the forces of the parliament drawing off from the siege in no small hurry and confusion, and forming line of battle upon Marston Moor, some eight miles to the westward of the city.

It was not without strenuous exertion that Arden at

length found the post assigned to his immediate superior, now lieutenant-general of the horse, who was intently occupied with Leslie, Fairfax, Manchester, and others of the chief commanders, in ordering their array so as to intercept the gallant host of royalists, some twenty thousand strong, with which Prince Rupert had well-nigh surprised them in their trenches. Night fell upon them ere the task was well completed; yet such was the determination and the spirit of the leaders, such the quick apprehension and obedience of the soldiery, that, by the aid of torches and the long summer twilight, their position was made good; and that, too, on the strongest ground that could be chosen from the extensive, low, and somewhat marshy meadows lying between the Ouse and the great northern road. Provisions were served out, with liquor, in abundance to the troops, who, for the most part, passed the night upon their arms, though some were quartered in the neighboring villages, commanding the anticipated line of Rupert's march. Patrols of horse and foot swept the surrounding roads; the officers, with jealous zeal, made constant circuits of the host, their progress being clearly indicated by the acclamations of the men, and the loud psalms of exultation and defiance which usually answered their inspiriting addresses.

Yet was their active energy on this occasion destined to be wasted; for scarcely was their host arrayed, ere the discharge of ordnance from the town, and the tremendous cheering, which was distinctly borne to the ears of the now disappointed Puritans, announced that Rupert, who, by the aid of better information and the exertion of great military skill, had executed a detour far to the right of their position, was actually entering the beleaguered city from the eastward side, whence they had drawn their troops in the vain hope to intercept him. Great was the consternation and dismay which this discovery created in the breast, not of the privates only, but of the best and boldest leaders of the parliament; and in no less degree did merriment and wild triumphant revelry possess the citizens, relieved beyond their utmost expectation.

Throughout the livelong night the eastern sky was reddened, well-nigh to the zenith, by the crimson glare of

bonfires blazing in every street and court within the walls, while the square towers of the minster, illuminated by the fierce discolored light, were visible distinctly at some miles' distance, their huge bells swinging to and fro, a deafening peal of short-lived exultation. Upon the moor a council was called instantly, and sentries took post round the quarters of the Scottish general, with the avowed intention of maintaining an inviolable secrecy concerning the debates of the stern martialists assembled there. Such was, however, the tumultuous and noisy character of the discussion between the English officers and the fanatical enthusiastic Presbyterian clergy, whom the Scotch brought habitually into their warlike councils, that no precaution could have hindered the entire army from perceiving that dissensions, fired by their religious differences, and fed to wilder heat by prejudice and national disgusts, had fallen, with a perilous and most pernicious influence, upon their leaders.

It was now nearly dawn, when, breaking up their long-protracted session, they at length came forth. Despondency and gloom sat heavy on the resolute and manly brow of Fairfax as he strode forth and leaped into his saddle, without altering his garb, though in immediate prospect of a general action. He was not, indeed, utterly unarmed, for he had entered the court-martial with but brief time for ceremony, after toiling from the preceding daybreak at the evacuation of the trenches; yet did he lack much of the heavy armature which was still worn by officers in high command. A buff coat, richly laced with silver, its open sleeves displaying the white satin of its lining; stout breeches of the same material, fringed at the knee with costly Flanders lace; and boots of russet leather, formed the chief part of his defensive dress, although he wore a short but highly polished breastplate, half covered by his falling collar from the looms of Valenciennes, and by the sash of crimson silk and gold which was wound many times about his waist, supporting his long silver-hilted broadsword.* He bore his trun-

* This description is taken from a portrait by Vandyke, in possession of Thomas Fairfax, Esq., of Newton Kyne, Yorkshire.

cheon in his hand, and, ere he mounted, buckled on his head the open bacinet of steel peculiar to the day, which an attendant held in readiness.

Upon the faces of the other generals anger, irresolution, and disgust were variously but strongly written; and in the features of the Scottish lords especially, Arden imagined he could trace a settled disaffection for the service they had bound themselves to execute. No time was lost, however, and by a series of manœuvres, not less judiciously than rapidly effected, the whole position of the army was re-formed and its ground taken up anew; so that its front, which had originally faced toward the west, as to oppose an enemy advancing against York from that direction, was now turned easterly, in readiness to meet the sally, which, they hoped, rather than expected, would be made on them from that same city.

Sir Thomas Fairfax, with his new-levied Yorkshire cavalry and three Scotch regiments of horse, held the extreme right wing, and next to him the infantry of his brave father, with two brigades of Scottish horse in readiness for his support. In the main body and reserve were all the regiments of Scottish foot, appointed well and officered by their own covenanting lords, and two of Manchester's brigades; while the left wing was occupied by Cromwell, with all his iron cavalry, and three good regiments of northern cuirassiers under Lieutenant-general Leslie, and Colonel Frizell's regiment of Berwickshire dragoons, who did good service in the action, posted yet farther to the left, by a cross ditch intersecting the main dike, which ran along the whole front of the Puritans, excepting a brief space before the Earl of Manchester's pike-regiments.

The plain, upon the western side of which the army was drawn up, was on the whole, well suited for a general action, being of considerable extent, entirely open, and untraversed by any hedge or fence save on the left, where a long narrow lane between high banks and bushes of old thorn debouched upon the field, forming the only pass by which Fairfax could cross the drain and bring his horsemen into action. The rear of the parliamentarians was

covered by the thickly-planted orchards, each with its quickset fence, the narrow garths and gardens surrounded by stout walls of limestone, and the young plantations round the straggling village of Long Marston; which, with its solid cottages of masonry, would form an excellent and easily-defended *point d' appui*, whereon to fall back if repulsed from their original position; while on both wings the strong enclosures of the pasture fields, studded with hedgerow timber, would present most serious obstacles to any movement of the enemy to overflank them. Of all the generals, it seemed to Edgar that Cromwell was the least disturbed in mind or aspect; yet even he, as he addressed his ironsides, spoke not with the short, terse, and energetic style which he was wont to use when he chose to be understood, but in interminable and confused harangues, resembling more the doctrinal discourses of a fanatical and visionary preacher than the heart-stirring oratory of a dauntless captain. Nor did he hesitate to declare openly to Arden, when at a little distance from the troopers, that — "Of a truth, there is sore need of prayer and supplication — not of lip-service or knee-bending — but of soul-searching cries, of earnest and continual wrestling with the Lord; for verily, unless he work great things this day in Israel's behalf, verily, Edgar Arden, you shall behold this host melting away like snow before the April sunshine. Unless the God, even the God of Battles, harden the hearts and blind the understanding of yon perverse and fiery Rupert, even as of yore he hardened the heart of Pharaoh, that he might bring him to destruction, with his captains, and his chariots, and his horsemen, unless he do all this, and more, I tell you, we shall fall into the pit ourselves have digged! If the prince have but wisdom to abide in yon fenced city which he has won from us, then shall you see the carnal-minded and the feeble-witted of the host, those who, like babes and sucklings, may not endure the rich meats and strong waters of the Word, those who are ill-assured, self-seekers, and backsliders, then shall you see all these, and they outnumber half our army, falling away by tens, by hundreds, and by thousands! But lo!" he added, in a quick, clear voice, strangely at variance with the drawling snuffle he

had thus far adopted, "whom have we here? Tidings, I trow, from my lord general;" for, as he spoke, a youthful officer dashed at a hasty gallop up to his side, and checking, for a moment's space, his fiery horse, "The earl," he cried, "lieutenant-general, prays you will hold yourself in readiness for instant action! Rupert and Newcastle are even now without the gates, and marching hitherward to fight us!"

"Said I not," shouted Oliver, so loudly that every one of his own cavalry might catch the import of his words—"said I not that the Lord would harden the heart of our foe and blind his understanding? The Lord he is on our side; blessed be the name of the Lord!" and instantly he raised, with his own tongue, the first notes of a hymn, in which he was accompanied at once by full five thousand deep and manly voices.

"Not unto us—not unto us be given
The glory and the praise—
Nor to the mortal sword—
Though shrewdly we have striven
Long nights and bloody days;
But unto thee, O Lord!"

The fierce sounds rolled along the front, from corps to corps, till one half of the host had kindled with the same enthusiastic confidence and swelled the same high chorus. It was one of those bright flashes of that brightest talent in a leader, the talent of inspiring trust, of awakening energy and zeal, of lighting into sudden flame the hearts of thousands by a single word—a talent, by-the-way, in which no captain ever has excelled, and probably but two* have ever in the least degree approached the wondrous man who was that very day about to make himself a reputation with the mightiest. As the thunders of that glorious psalm rolled onward, gaining strength at every pause, and echoing far around, doubt and despondency passed rapidly away; pulses, that but an hour before had throbbed with cold and feeble beatings, now leaped exultingly; eyes, that had rested sullenly upon the earth, flashed cheerfully and vividly to the new-risen sun; and tongues,

* Mohammed and Napoleon.

that had half uttered words of evil omen, and almost of fear, now swelled the warlike anthem to the skies.

Before the psalm had yet well ceased, and while its echoes were still alive and ringing in the air, the pike-heads of the royal foot might be seen twinkling in the level sunbeams above the coppices and furze-brakes that fringed the east side of the plain. And now a massive column burst into open view, their bright steel sallets and their coats of plate reflecting in broad sheets the light, which flashed in long and dazzling streaks from their tall weapons as they wheeled up into line. Now a strong brigade of field artillery, its caissons and its tumbrils following, came rumbling up at a full trot; and now, with many a blazoned standard streaming, and a white sea of plumes floating above them, squadron after squadron of that superb and highborn cavalry, to which the king owed all his previous victories, rounded a distant wood, and formed in accurate array upon the royal left. Then, as these formed, the heads of column after column debouched upon the plain, their mounted leaders darting along their flanks and fronts, their music sounding joyously, and the thick trampling of their march shaking the very ground beneath them. As these formed up, another train of field-pieces and a yet more magnificent array of horse wheeled up at the full gallop, and fronted Cromwell's ironsides at a mile's distance on the open plain.

By seven of the clock both armies were in full array of battle, facing each other, when a gallant group of mounted officers advanced a little from the centre of the cavaliers, and instantly, amid the blare of trumpets and the exulting shouts "God save the king" of the brave gentlemen who mustered under it, the royal standard, with its gorgeous quarterings, was displayed to the light breeze, which bore its folds to their full length, and shook them toward the squadrons of its unrelenting foes. At the same moment, from the midst of the dark masses of the Puritans, coldly arrayed in buff and plain gray steel, with neither scarf, nor plume, nor lace of silver or of gold to break the dull monotony of their appearance, was hoisted the blue banner of the covenant, bearing St. George's cross of red, but not yet intersected by the white diagonals of Scotland's

patron saint. The elevation of this broad dark-colored sheet was greeted by a stern and solemn conclamation, as different from the wild and animated clamor of the cavaliers, as is the deep incessant booming of the ocean-surf from the sharp, keen explosions of a thunder-storm.

Then followed a short pause, a fearful and appalling interval of quiet, like the brief space that often intervenes between the mustering of the storm-clouds and the outbreaking of the hurricane. The faces of the bravest paled, and their pulses beat with a quickened and irregular motion, not from the slightest touch of fear, but from the intense violence of their excitement. Prayers were recited in this interval at the head of every regiment among the parliamentarians, and many of the officers, and not a few even of the private troopers, men whom the spirit of the Lord had blessed with the high gift of expounding mysteries, held forth in their wild jargon, savoring to the ears of Edgar rather of blasphemous and profane phrensy than of devotion or well-ordered piety. It was at this conjuncture, just as Cromwell had concluded a long and fervent prayer, tinctured at times with true heartfelt religion, bursting occasionally into gleams of real eloquence, and throughout fixing the attention of the zealots, who applauded him from time to time with voice and gesture, that the same group of officers which had displayed the royal standard galloped in full career along the whole front of the cavaliers midway between the armies. The leading officer, as Edgar gazed upon him through his perspective-glass, was a tall, strongly-built, and splendidly-accoutred man, superbly mounted on a jet-black barb of the tall breed of Dongola. His cuirass literally blazed with stars and decorations of a dozen military orders; his mantle of dark purple velvet, fringed and laid down with lace of gold three inches broad, displayed the diamond insignia of the garter, and his high-crowned Spanish hat was overshadowed by an ostrich plume nearly two feet in height. Yet were his features coarse and ill-favored, marked with a supercilious sneer, and an expression ill-humored, haughty, and imperious; his hair, which flowed far down his shoulders, was harsh and quite uncurled; his figure, too, though tall and powerful, was graceless; his

body corpulent and gross, betraying symptoms of debauchery and license, as plainly as his countenance reflected a mind despotic, brutal, and self-willed.

The most profound respect attended his swift passage through the lines, and ever and anon some change of station or some delicate manœuvre was executed on his bidding; but when he reached the extreme right of the royalists, he paused for some time in deep and earnest contemplation of the post occupied by Cromwell with his cavalry, which were even then engaged in chanting one of their vengeful and prophetic hymns. Then sending off a dozen officers on the full spur in different directions, he cantered coolly forward with but two attendants, and these private troopers, till he was distant scarce three musket shots from the grim ironsides. Here he again drew in his horse, leaped to the ground, and levelling his glass upon the pommel of his demipique, swept the array of Oliver with careful scrutiny.

Edgar had from the first concluded that this leader was no other than the impetuous and daring Rupert; had he, however, doubted it, the bitter imprecations and fierce shouts of the excited Puritans, to whom his cruelty and his successes had rendered him an object of especial hatred, must have at once convinced him. But he had little time for observation; for Rupert, in his audacious reconnaissance, had, as it seemed, miscalculated his own distance from Frizell's Scotch dragoons, or overlooked the ditch that ran obliquely from their station to a point within a few yards of the elevation he had chosen, as commanding much of the parliament's position, an oversight which escaped not that experienced officer. A dozen of his men, as the prince halted, had dismounted from their horses, and, with their harquebusses ready and their matches lighted, stole on from bush to bush, behind the bank, unseen and unsuspected by the engrossed and anxious leader, till within short carbine distance. Then, flash after flash, their scattering fire burst from the willow-bushes and the tufts of flags that lined the water-course; and, ere the sharp reports had reached the ears of Arden, one of the prince's followers leaped up in his saddle and fell dead at his general's feet, while the perspective-glass

dashed from his fingers, and the white plume severed by another bullet, showed how well-aimed and narrowly-escaped had been the volley destined for Rupert's person. The charger of the fallen trooper dashed masterless across the field, followed with nearly equal speed by the surviving soldier, who halted not till he had reached his comrades. But he whose life was aimed at more peculiarly, did not so much as look toward the enemy, whose fire had so nigh slain him, till he had raised his follower from the bloody sod, and ascertained that aid was useless. Then, quietly remounting, he shook his clinched hand in the air at the dragoons, who had reloaded and were now in open view preparing for a second shot, and trotted leisurely away toward his chosen horsemen.

Scarce had this passed ere Edgar's notice was attracted by the raised voice of Cromwell, on whom he had been hitherto in close attendance, but who had ridden a short space to the left to give some orders to the colonel of one of his own regiments. His words were lost to Arden from the distance; but, by the short, stern intonation of his accents, he knew that something was amiss, and galloped up to him at once. The officer whom Cromwell addressed was sitting motionless before his regiment, his bridle loose upon his charger's neck, his open hands raised upward, his dull and heavy features lighted up by a phrensied glare, and his voice rolling forth sentence after sentence of unconnected texts, strung, as it were, together by a running commentary of his own ill-digested ravings.

"Heard you me not? Ho! Colonel Obadiah Jepherson," shouted the general, close in his ears, his features kindling and his voice quivering with rage, "heard you me not command you straightway to despatch troops to bring up the fascines, that, when we list advance, we may have wherewithal to cross the ditch? Heard you not, or do you dare to disobey me?"

"Must I not, then," replied the other, in a drawling tone, "as Balak said to Balaam, 'must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put into my mouth?'" and, turning toward the troops, he again went on—

"Wherefore be ye as those, O brethren, whom the Lord set apart to Gideon—"

But not for many words did he continue his oration; for, plunging both his spurs up to the rowel-heads into his mighty charger, and plucking forth a pistol from his holster, Oliver dashed against him. Leaving the rein at liberty, by the mere pressure of his limbs he wheeled the horse, as he was on the point of riding down his disobedient officer, and, seizing with his left hand the collar of his buff coat, with the right he pressed the muzzle of his weapon to his temples, with so much violence that, when the pistol was withdrawn, a livid ring remained on the indented and discolored flesh.

"Now, by the Lord that liveth," he hissed between his set teeth, but in a whisper so emphatic and distinct that all around him heard it—"if thou but wink an eyelid, much more speak, or move to disobey me, it were better for thee thou hadst ne'er been born! Away! and do my bidding, sirrah, or thou shalt die the death—" and, as he spoke, he shook him off so suddenly that he well-nigh lost his saddle as he turned hastily away to set about his duty with as much alacrity as though he did so of his own free will. At the same time a loud, sharp roar told that the action had commenced; and, riding once more to his station, Edgar beheld a snow-white cloud surge slowly up toward the royal left. A bright flash followed it. Another burst of dense and solid smoke; another sharp explosion; and then, each after each, they woke, the cannon of the cavaliers, till their whole front was veiled in wreathed smoke, drifting toward the parliament's array, and filling all the intermediate space as with a palpable and massive substance; while the continuous and deafening roar precluded for a while the possibility of hearing, and almost of thought.

Anon the answering ordnance of the Puritans belched forth its flame and smoke, and added its din to the awful uproar. At times, when the clouds melted for a moment under the freshening breeze, Edgar and his yet more observant leader might catch glances of the royal pikemen pouring in solid columns to the charge, the long lines of their levelled weapons glittering through the smoke; or

farther to their right, the masses of their horse, wheeling like flights of seabirds to and fro, now all in gorgeous sunshine, and now all in gloom. Meanwhile the rattling of the musketry was mingled with the deeper bellowing of cannon; and, among all and over all, the thundering accents of that most potent of all vocal instruments, the voice of man, pealed upward to the polluted heavens. A long half hour elapsed, and they might hear the battle raging at every instant fiercer toward their right, yet they remained still unengaged themselves, and without tidings or directions how to act.

"By heaven," cried Arden, as he caught the distant glitter of the royal standard floating among the smoke almost within the Puritan position — "by heaven, our right must be repulsed;" and, as he spoke, an aid-de-camp dashed in, wounded and ghastly, from the right; and, as he reined his charger up, the gallant brute fell lifeless under him. "Fairfax is beaten back, and all our right wing scattered," he exclaimed as he arose.

"Silence, man," Cromwell sternly interrupted him. "Wouldst thou dismay all these? Say on—but here, apart, and not above your breath, an' you would live to speak it out! Say on!"

"Fairfax is beaten utterly, and all the right wing broken: you may not find two score of it together. As he charged through yon accursed lane, the musketry of Belial mowed his ranks like grass before the scythe; and lo! the sons of Zeruiah—"

"Tush! tell me not of Belial and of Zeruiah! or, by the life of the Eternal, I will smite thee with my truncheon! Speak out in plain, blunt English," again interrupted Oliver. "Fairfax was broken — and what then?"

"His Yorkshire levies, flying all disorderly," replied the officer, confused and panting still from the effects of his late fall, "trampled beneath their feet and utterly dispersed Lord Ferdinando's foot; Balgony's lancers only broke one royal regiment, and stout Sir Thomas, with but six troops of all our northern horse, has cut his passage through the cavaliers. These are now struggling hitherward; the rest are routed past redemption! Lucas, and

Porter, and the malignant Goring are playing havoc on the flank of our best Scottish foot, and Newcastle, with all his whitecoats, is winning way in front at the pike's point."

"What message from the general? Quick, sir," cried Cromwell — "quick!"

"That you draw out with all despatch, and charge Prince Rupert!"

"Why said you not so sooner?" Oliver replied. "Thou, Righteous Lambert, ride to Jepherson; bid him advance with the fascines and fill yon ditch! Hulton and Barnaby, off with you to the first and second regiments; we will advance and cross the drain at a brisk trot, and — Ha! their ordnance ceases on the left; Rupert will meet us straightway! Forward!—advance! Arden, be near me thou! Forward! Sound trumpets;" and at a quick trot they advanced, but in the deepest silence, save for the clashing of their armor and the earth-shaking clatter of their hoofs.

"Ha!" Oliver exclaimed again, as a quick spattering volley on their left was heard distinctly, though the smoke-wreaths were too closely packed to suffer objects to be seen above a spear's length distant, "there goes the musketry of Frizell; and now we clear the smoke!" and, even with the words, they passed the ditch, which was filled level with the surface just at the moment of their reaching it; and, as they passed it, the dense clouds from the royal cannon, which, after the discharge had ceased, sailed sluggishly down wind and hung about the Puritans some minutes longer than around the cavaliers, soared slowly upward, and disclosed the whole of that eventful field. One glance showed Cromwell that the whole right of their position was indeed broken — scattered to the four winds of heaven—and that their centre, though supported by the whole reserve, could scarce maintain itself against the desperate odds with which it was engaged; though by the fast and rattling volleys, and the repeated charges of the pikemen, he saw that all was not yet over.

The second glance showed him the prince in person, with the whole gallant cavalry of his right wing, ad-

vancing at full trot to charge him, with scarce five hundred yards between them; while a strong mass of pikemen, intent on turning the extreme left of the Scottish centre, had advanced so far beyond their horse as to expose a portion of their own right flank. "Arden!" he shouted, with a voice clear as a trumpet, "away! A flying charge upon the flank of yon pike-regiment; ride over them, wheel promptly, and fall in upon the left flank of Prince Rupert! Buxton, ride thou to Frizell, and tell him not to charge, but to deploy and to maintain his fire. For life! for life! Now for the work. Gallop! ho! Charge! Down with the sons of Zeruiah! Ha! ha! the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

An instant was enough; his messengers rode like the wind; and with a mighty shout, that rose above the thousand fearful sounds that mingled to make up the thundrous voice of battle, the ironsides plunged headlong on the advancing cavaliers. Five thousand horse at least on either side, splendid in all the vain equipments that cast a false and fleeting light of glory over the ghastly face of havoc! On they went — man to man, and horse to horse, panting for bloodshed as for the breath of life — drunk with excitement — thoughtless of all except the present! The trumpets of the royalists were scarcely audible among the yells and shouts of the wild fanatics. "Ha! Zerubbabel! Down with the cursed of God! Ho! Napthali; on, Benjamin! Strike, and spare not! strike in *his* name—even his *own* name, JAH!"

The phrensy of their onset, for they charged like madmen rather than cool and steady veterans, together with the slight confusion which always must be felt by an assailing party, which in the very moment of attack is suddently assailed, would have gone hard against the cavaliers; but when to this was added the continual and well-aimed fire of Frizell's Scotch dragoons, cutting down horse and man along their right by hundreds; and when the fresh and gallant regiment of Arden, which — having fallen at an oblique tangent on the right flank of the pikemen, and driven through them like a thunderbolt with an unbroken front — had wheeled, without a second's pause, above the dead and dying, as orderly as on pa-

rade, and charged full on the naked left of Rupert's cavalry — it was no wonder that they were cast into complete and irretrievable disorder.

For some time all was close and deadly conflict; for such was the ecstatic valor of the gentlemen who battled for the crown, and such the rash and stubborn daring of their leader, that they persisted still, rallying in squadrons or in troops, when their whole line was broken and confused; and still, when these were routed, rushed on in desperate knots of ten or twelve against the victors, and dealt them death on every hand, with pistol, carbine-but, and broadsword.

Five times, at least, did Rupert rally his own regiment, and bring it up to be again repulsed; and, in the last charge, singling Arden out, whose prowess he had noticed in the melée, he drove his horse against him, and smote him such a blow as shivered the tried rapier, which he raised to guard it, to the hilt, and, falling thence with scarce abated violence upon his morion, cleft it down to the hair, but deadened by the trusty steel, inflicted no wound on the wearer. It was well for Edgar that at this moment a fresh charge by Fairfax, Crawford, and Balgony, who had come up from the right wing across the rear, was made with equal skill and execution, while Cromwell drew off and re-formed his troops, bearing the prince and all his bravest backward, pushing his squadrons, utterly defeated, clear off the field, and chasing them with fearful havoc to the very walls of York.

A little interval ensued while they called off their stragglers, eager for vengeance, and scattered by the melée; but, ere ten minutes had elapsed, the ironsides, though thinned in number and above half of them wounded, were under their own colors and in their regular ranks. Ten minutes more flew by, and nothing was yet done; they held the ground with not a foe before them, while on their right the enemy's whole infantry, whose flank, by the defeat of Rupert, was open to their charge, was gradually pushing back their own foot, step by step, at the pike's point, from their position. Amazed at this delay, and fearing some mishap, Arden intrusted his command to his lieutenant, and, mounting a fresh horse, galloped

off in search of Cromwell, whom he found bleeding fast from two wounds—both above his shoulders, one in the neck, a graze, as it was said, by a chance pistol-shot from his own men; the other a smart sword-cut on the collar-bone—and evidently faint and falling from the loss of blood.

"A surgeon, ho!" cried Edgar; "bear him away to the rear!"

"Not for the world," said Oliver, in a low voice, but stern. "Shall I go while the Lord has need of me? Form to the right, brave hearts, and follow me! The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" and, making a last effort to lead them to the charge, he tottered in his stirrups, and would have fallen had not two subalterns supported him and borne him to the rear.

"What now, lieutenant-colonel?" exclaimed Jepherson, from the head of the next regiment, as Cromwell was conveyed away.

"Heard you not then the general's order?" answered Arden. "Each regiment form open column to the right by troops, and charge all on the flank of yon dense mass of musketeers and pikemen! Thou, Jepherson, wheel round upon the rear of yon brigade of whitecoats; thou, Desborough, cut thy way through yonder pikemen. Sound trumpets! forward all!"

And on they went, with nothing to oppose or stand before them. Regiment after regiment, taken in flank or rear, were cut down, trampled under foot, dashed out of the very shape and semblance of array. But now they reached the whitecoats; Newcastle's own brigade, of musketeers and pikemen mingled, four thousand strong, picked men, flushed with success and valiant.

Well was it then that Arden had wheeled Jepherson upon their rear; for, as he came upon their flank, while they were fighting hard in front with the Scotch infantry, they formed a second face with admirable skill, and opened on him such a fire from their second and rear ranks as emptied well-nigh half his saddles, while their pikes presented an impenetrable rampart against his gallant horses.

With difficulty he rallied his own regiment and again

brought it to the charge; and, at the self-same instant, Jepherson burst upon their rear. Assailed upon three sides at once, they broke; but fought it out even then, standing in small groups, back to back, refusing quarter to the last, and lying in their lines when dead as they had fought when living. Oh, noble victims! thanklessly sacrificed in the upholding of a tyrant against their country's freedom! slain innocently in an evil cause! Alas! alas! for their free English blood, poured out like water on their native soil, not to defend, but to destroy its liberties!

With the destruction of the whitecoats the battle in truth ended; for, though a greencoated brigade still offered stout resistance, it was but a last effort of despair. The parliament's whole centre, now relieved from their assailants, moved steadily and promptly up, pursuing the advantage gained by the gallant ironsides, and pressing on the scattered parties of the royalists with such relentless zeal, that they could never rally till they had reached the walls of York.

Whole squadrons pushed into the Ouse, were drowned in its deep waters, or pitilessly slaughtered on its banks. The cavalry, with Arden at their head, meanwhile still drove right onward; and, wonderful to tell, traversed the whole position of the enemy, from end to end, in perfect and unbroken order, sweeping the relics of that disastrous fight before them as the surf drives the wreck which its own violence has made, before its foaming waters. Then, having reached the farthest royal left, they wheeled once more to the right, and actually occupied the ground which Lucas, with his cavaliers, had held at the beginning of the action. The only enemy now left upon the field were these same victors; who, having conquered Fairfax and his tumultuary levies, had pressed with much success upon the flank of Manchester's and Lindsay's regiment of foot, till these stout squadrons, when relieved by Edgar's overwhelming charge upon their enemies in front, found leisure to concentrate all their efforts against the cavalry which had so nigh defeated them, and were in turn repulsing them; when, on the very spot where they had first so roughly handled Fairfax and his northern horse, Arden fell on them unawares, and

well avenged his comrades. In this last conflict the ground was broken with steep banks and scattered bushes, and the deep channel of the drain alluded to above. Here, as before, the fight was obstinate, and hand to hand, among the troops; when, just as Edgar's men drove Lucas back, killing his horse and making himself prisoner, while all was smoke, and tumult, and confusion, a small but well appointed troop of cavaliers wheeled round some alder-bushes and charged home. These, for a moment, threw his force into disorder, but unsupported and too weak in numbers, they fell fast, and at the last drew off, their leader fighting desperately to cover their retreat, till a shot struck his charger; and, as he rolled upon the gory and hoof-dinted sod, a savage fanatic shortened his sword to stab the prostrate rider.

Edgar's eye caught a glimpse of the gray hairs and noble features that were now disclosed, blood-stained and ghastly, by the falling of his battered morion. With a fierce cry he bounded from his horse—he was—he was in time!

He struck one rapier up, received another, which he could not parry, in his own sword-arm; but he had saved his father. It was not he alone, however, who had perceived Sir Henry's peril. A desperate rally of his followers was made to rescue him; the tide of fight had rolled away after the flying cavaliers of Lucas; and in an instant, ere he could strike a blow or shout his war cry, Arden, second to Cromwell only as the winner of that bloody day, was made a captive, and borne off at a gallop by the fugitives from that very field, on which his conduct and his valor had retrieved the fortunes of his party when on the very verge of absolute annihilation.

CHAPTER VII.

A READY HELP IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

> Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
> It should be thus with him—he must die to-morrow.
>
> *Measure for Measure.*

> The outmost crowd have heard a sound
> Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground.
> Nearer it came, and yet more near,
> The very headsmen paused to hear.
>
> SCOTT'S *Rokeby.*

It was already past the middle of the night which followed the tremendous conflict upon Marston Moor, yet many a light was glancing through the casements of the adjoining village, in which the cavalry of the victorious army had taken up its quarters. Strange and discordant noises eddied among the low-browed cottages, the stamp and scream of vicious chargers, the clash of arms, the din of the artillery wagons groaning and creaking over the ill-made roads, the moans and outcries of the wounded wretches, waked to fresh agonies by the rough motion of the carts which bore them from the field, watering the dust beneath their wheels with human gore; and yet, though every house and shed was occupied by the rude soldiery, there mingled not one tone of riot or debauchery with the accustomed sounds that indicate the presence of an armed multitude.

All grave and stern the sentinels stalked their appointed rounds, or, if they broke the silence of their watch, it was but by the humming of some pious canticle; while ever and anon the louder accents of some military preacher rose upon the ear, or the deep chorus of a distant hymn. No wassailings prevailed about the watchfires; no songs of profane triumph were bellowed from the hostelries wherein the men were billeted; no yells of savage laughter nor female shrieks broke forth to tell of warlike license; in short, the aspect of the hamlet was rather that of some immense conventicle of armed enthusiasts, than of the

nightly quarter of a triumphant host fresh from the shock, the rapture, and the glory of the battle.

Before one dwelling, of pretensions somewhat greater than its neighbors, having a little court-yard with a low stone wall before it, and a grotesquely sculptured porch of native sandstone, there sat two mounted privates of the ironsides, one on each side the gate, so still and motionless that, but for the occasional tossing of their chargers' heads, or whisk of their long tails, they might have passed for lifeless statues. The pale beams of the moon slept placidly upon their morions and breastplates, while the bright scarlet of their doublets was mellowed by the partial light into a dimmer and more sober hue. Within the court two more of the same sturdy corps walked to and fro, with ported carbines, crossing each other at brief intervals, the red sparks of their lighted matches showing their readiness for instant service.

Within the house all were at rest save in one chamber, opening directly from the narrow hall or passage, whence might be heard, even without the walls, a heavy and irregular footstep clanging with military spurs upon the flagstones which composed the cottage floor, and now and then the suppressed murmur of a voice communing, as it seemed, with the deep thoughts of the speaker.

It was a large, low-roofed, and stone-paved room, with heavy rafters; and a huge open chimney of black oak, dingy and mantled with the smoke of ages. A wide low window, divided into many lattices by massive freestone mullions, with a long settle of carved wainscoting beneath it, occupied the whole of one side, while opposite to it, and at right angles to the hearth, another seat, of similar materials but superior workmanship, with a high panelled back and elbows, was disposed so as to shield th occupants from the keen blasts that found their way in winter through many a crevice of the time-shaken walls. Over this antique piece of furniture a scarlet dragoon cloak was flung at random with a broad-brimmed and high-crowned hat of dark gray felt hooked on one of the knobs which decorated its extremities, while from the other hung a buff belt, with a long iron-hilted tuck. Upon a table close before the hearth, on which a dozen fast-de-

caying brands silently smouldered, stood, with its wick tall and unsnuffed, a solitary lamp, casting a feeble and uncertain light about the room, which served, however, to display a brace of horseman's heavy pistols, an open map, a telescope, a worn and greasy Bible, and a leader's truncheon lying beside it on the board, as well as a confused assemblage of steel armor piled in a large armed chair, and glancing with obscure reflections from the shadow of a distant corner.

It was, however, the inmate of the chamber that lent its chief attraction to the scene—a strong-built and stern-featured man, clad in a military suit of buff, such as was then worn under the corslet and thigh-pieces of the cavalry; his cumbersome jackboots were still about his legs, garnished with spurs as when he left the saddle, though all his other armor had been doffed in consequence of recent wounds, as it would seem from many a speck and splash of dingy crimson on the leathern cassock, and from his left arm bound up by a silken sling. It was the leader of the ironsides. There was a wild, unnatural expression on his grim features as he passed and repassed the light, and a strange glare in his deep-set eye almost like that of the insane. He muttered, at times, in audible and articulate sounds, but mostly in a half-uttered, inward key, striding the while with heavy but uneven steps, now fast, now slow, across the echoing floor; his hands were now crossed firmly on his breast, now tossed aloft as if they brandished the war-weapon, and now they griped each other with so stern a pressure that the blood started from beneath his nails. It might be that the fever of his wounds had terminated for the moment to his brain; it might be that a darker fit than common of his fanatic hypochondriasm had occupied his mind; but on this night the wise and crafty conqueror of Rupert resembled rather the mysterious *energumenos*, the possessed, fiend-tortured maniac of holy writ, than the cool, self-controlling, scientific leader he had that day approved himself.

"King?—king?" at last he exclaimed, audibly, pausing from his uneasy walk, with an expression of uncertainty and even terror distinctly marked in every feature; "didst thou say king? No, no! not king! Avaunt,

Baalzebul! Get thee behind me, Sathanas! It said not 'king!' that solemn and tremendous shape, that drew the curtains of my boyish couch at the unhallowed hour of midnight—'The greatest one in England, but not king!'* Ho! have I foiled thee there? Ha—ha! well art thou called the prince of liars—get thee behind me! tempt me no more! Away, foul slave! By the Lord's help, I spit at and defy thee!"

He took two or three turns across the room more quickly than before, and, again pausing, cried, "A trick of fantasy? Who saith it was unreal—have we not ears to hear and eyes to see? and shall we not believe what we do hear and see? Did not a spirit pass before the face of Job, that the hair of his flesh stood up? Stood it not still, yet he could not discern the form thereof? Was there not silence, and he heard a voice? And came it not to pass so likewise unto me, and much more also? Again—Did not the evil-minded Saul call up, through her at Endor, the living spirit of the departed prophet, that it did prophesy to him? And yet again—Did not the Roman Brutus, idolater although he was and heathen, hold converse with the shadow of his kingly victim, that was his evil genius at Philippi? And may not I—I, that was written down before the world began—I, that have been predestinate of old to execute the wrath of the Most Highest, and press the wine-press of his vengeance—may not I, too, commune with disembodied ministers that walk in the night season? Go to! go to! I heard its mighty accents as I started from my slumber, and they yet tingle in my fleshly ears—'Arouse thee, thou that shalt be first in England!' But not—it said *not*—king!"

Again he took a short and hurried turn through the apartment—"And if it had," he cried, in higher tones—"and if it had said king! Be there not lying spirits—be there not tempters—be there not false prophets? Had it said king, then had I roused myself indeed! Then had I striven with the Evil One that he had fled me! for to the

* It is notorious that a story was in existence among the contemporaries of Cromwell, long before his attainment even of high *military* rank, to the effect that he had been awakened from his sleep, when a boy, by a mysterious shape, which told him he should be *the greatest man in England*, not, however, using the word *king*

putting down, not to the raising up of tyrants was I called —not that to me men should bow down the knee, and wallow in the dust, and cry 'Hail, monarch!' but that, throughout this goodly realm of England, there should be innocence, and righteousness, and peace, and liberty, and truth, forever!" He paused again in his soliloquy, and, as he paused, the challenge of a distant sentinel rang sharp and clear through the still night. The clatter of a horse's hoofs followed—another challenge—and another—a bustle in the courtyard, and the sound of several feet hurrying toward the door. With the first faint alarm the general was himself again; he passed his hand across his eyes, and drew a deep sigh, as if to ease his breast; then, turning to the table hastily, he trimmed the waning lamp, and, seating himself, instantly resumed the studies whence he had probably been hurried by the ferment of his distempered spirits.

The outer door was opened, and several persons, after a moment's parley with the sentinel on duty, entered the house. A heavy hand rapped quickly on the door, followed by a blunt voice—"The captain of the watch to speak with General Cromwell."

"Enter the captain of the watch," cried Oliver; and as the well-known face of an approved and trusty comrade met his eye—"What now, good Kingsland," he exclaimed; "how goes it with the host?"

"All thanks be to the Giver of all mercies, well!" replied the officer; "but here is one without—yea, even one from the stronghold of the malignants—seeking to parley with you."

"One from the town of York—ha?" answered Cromwell, with the speed of thought; "admit him speedily—"

"Nay, not from York," returned the other, "nor is it any *he*. Of verity it is a damsel, yea, and a damsel decked with the comeliness—truly, I say, with the loveliness of the flesh!"

"Tush! tell not me of comeliness!" cried Oliver, very sharply; "of God's truth, Ahaziah Kingsland, thou art a fool thus to disturb my meditations for a most frail and painted potsherd—a Delilah, I warrant me—a Rechab—yea, and a painted Jezabel—a harlot from the camp of

the Egyptians. Cast her forth straightway! leave me, I say—begone!"

"It is not so," replied the other, sturdily—"it is not so, an' you will hear me out. It is a maiden of repute; she rode up to our outpost on the western road with three stout serving-men, seeking the captain of the night, and, verily, when I was brought to her, she claimed to speak with General Cromwell touching the young man Edgar Arden—"

"Whom, of a truth, my spirit loveth. Admit her, and that, too, without tarrying; and bid them fetch in fuel, for lo! the fire hath burnt low while I did watch and pray, and the night air is chill, though it be summer—and lights and wine, I say, and creature comforts, such as may fit the tender and the delicate of women!"

The words were yet upon the lips of Cromwell when a tall female figure, marked by that indescribable yet not to be mistaken air of grace which is seen rarely but in persons conscious of the possession of high station and pre-eminent endowments, was ushered into the dim-lighted chamber. The coarse, dark-colored riding-cloak, wrapped closely round her form, could not entirely conceal the elegant proportions which it was evidently intended to disguise; and still less could the wide-leafed hat of country straw, tied closely down upon the cheeks by a silk kerchief, mask the aristocratic mould of the fair features, or hide the rich luxuriance of the light-brown hair, which hung, uncurled and damp with the night dews, far down upon her shoulders.

A slight bustle occurred while the general, with his attendant officers, tendered her in dumb show the courtesies demanded by her apparent rank, and yet more by her isolated and defenseless situation; but, with an air of quiet dignity, she waved off their civilities, and expressed, more by her manner than her words, a wish to be left alone with the far-dreaded leader of the Independents. Meanwhile more logs had been heaped on the hearth, and now threw up a flickering and lively glow, which, added to the lustre of some three or four fresh lights, diffused itself into the farthest angles of the room. The serving-men and his subordinates withdrew, Oliver sternly order-

ing them to hold themselves aloof, and pray to be deliv ered from the sin of eavesdropping. Then, without any affectation, or display of fear or of embarrassment, the lady dropped her mantle, and stood forth revealed in all the bright and beautiful proportions of Sibyl Arden. Her face was pale as death, yet it was firm and perfectly composed; there was no flutter of her pulse, no tremor of her frame, no doubt or hesitation in the clear cold glance of her expressive eye—all was calm, self-confiding, resolute, and fearless.

"I have come hither," she said, without waiting to be first addressed, in a voice slow and passionless, yet exquisitely musical, "I have come hither, General Cromwell, in a fashion men will deem unmaidenly, and women bold unto effrontery. I have come hither under the shade of night, alone, save with the company of menials, unto the foeman of my family, my king, my country! yet dare not, even in your most inward soul, to deem me light or frail. I have come, I say, hither, casting aside all prejudice, all fear, and all reserve—defying the opinion of the world—incurring the contempt, the hatred, and, perhaps, the curse of those I hold most dear. Yet have I come, upheld by mine own conscience, and firm in the resolve to hinder a foul crime. All other means have failed—tears, arguments, entreaties! All—all! I say, save this. Get you, then, instantly," she went on, rising as she spoke into strong energy, "to horse! To horse! to horse! if you would save your friend, your fellow-soldier, your preserver—alas! that he is such—if you would save Edgar Arden! He is a captive to the cavaliers, sentenced to die at daybreak."

"To die!" vehemently interrupted Cromwell—"to die! they dare not—no, for their souls they dare not! Did they but harm one hair of him, I would hang fifty of their best and noblest higher than ever Haman swung in the free airs of heaven!"

"Sentenced," she continued, quietly, and without heeding the interruption, "to die to-morrow! Yet he may still be rescued if you will it so. Prisoner to a small body of the retreating cavaliers, he will be shot at daybreak if not released this night; nor can he be released save by

your strict obedience to my bidding! Obey me, and to-night you rescue him who would have died to save you! Despise my warning, and to-morrow you may, perchance—avenge him."

With a fixed, scrutinizing glance, the general gazed upon her features while she spoke, as though he would peruse her soul. "And who," he said, at length, "and who are you that speak thus resclutely, act thus boldly, in behalf of him who is the foeman of your tribe—even the stout and valiant Arden?"

"It matters not," she answered, steadily, "it matters not who I may be, or what. It matters only that you subscribe to my conditions, and get you straight to horse."

"Thus far it matters only," answered Cromwell, "that, an' I know you not, yea! and, moreover, know your motives likewise, I stir not, horse nor man! There be enow of dames and damoiselles among you who would deem falsehood very righteous truth, if so ye might entrap one who—although himself he saith it—hath been and will be a keen instrument, yea, a two-edged sword, to work destruction on the sons of Belial!"

"Not so, not so!" she broke upon his speech with striking energy, "not so, by all my hopes of Heaven! Such may be thy creed, to do ill that good may come of it; but I—I would not stoop to falsehood were it to buy the lives of thousands such as thou art. My aim, my only aim, is to preserve the young from a most cruel and heart-rending doom—to save the aged from a most deadly crime. I am—know it, and use the knowledge as you list—I am the niece of your friend's father."

"Ha! Mistress Sibyl Arden—is it so?" muttered the general, musingly. "The brother's daughter of that perverse and bloody-minded old malignant, whose right hand is crimson—crimson with the persecution of the saints! Verily this is a sure and trusty witness! And so you would preserve the youth—a valiant youth he is, and I do say it—stout of heart, strong of hand, tender of conscience—yea, a burning and a shining light to men. And so thou wouldst preserve him, and wouldst wed with him—ha! is it not so?—and win him to the faction of the man

Charles Stuart!—preserve his life so to destroy his soul! Is it not so? Ha! have I read your heart?"

"You have *not*," she answered, with calm dignity, "you have *not* read it; nor can you so much as conjecture or imagine the motives or the thoughts of such as I, more than you can comprehend the sacred truths which you misquote, perverting them to your own ruin. Know, General Cromwell, that, not to be the empress of the universe—not to restore my sovereign to his lawful throne—my country to its ancient peace, would I espouse the man who, whether from misapprehended duty or from willful wrong, can band himself with persons like to thee—lending himself a willing tool to be played off by rebels to their monarch—traitors to their country, and—alas! that I should live to say it—hypocrites before their God! It is for this—for this that I would have him live, that *he* may not lack season for repentance; and that his miserable father may be spared the sin of slaying his own son!"

"His father!" shouted Cromwell, excited now beyond all self-restraint, "his father! In God's name, speak out, maiden! His father! Merciful Lord! what meanest thou?"

"He is a captive to Sir Henry Arden," she replied; "made captive in the very action of defending him, and doomed by him to perish, as a rebel and a traitor, with the first break of dawn!"

"Where lie these cavaliers? What be their numbers? Speak!"

"Promise me, then," she said, with infinite composure, "promise me, as you are a gentleman, a soldier, and a christian, that, save to rescue Edgar Arden, you will not turn the tidings I shall give you to your own gain or to King Charles' detriment. Promise before the Lord, and by your hopes of an hereafter, that you will shed no drop of blood which is not absolutely needful to his safety; and more, that, he once safe, you will strike no blow farther, but return straightway to this spot, molesting no man, nor taking any note of their position or proceedings against whom I shall lead you, for twelve hours' space."

"Tush—tush! it may not be. Say quickly where they lie, and what their numbers, so shall we save your lover; but dally not, I pray you, lest we may be too late to rescue."

"Promise!" she answered, steadily.

"Dally not, maiden—I say dally not," Cromwell repeated, very sternly, "else shall the blood of him thou lovest, and not this only, but the guilt of that insane old homicide rest on *your* head, who mightst have saved them, but wouldst not."

"Promise, or not a word from me. Promise, or I go hence, and Heaven befriend whom thou desertest to destruction."

"It may not be, I say—it may not be!" he cried, gnashing his teeth, and stamping violently on the floor, in a fierce paroxysm of unbridled rage. "Speak quickly, girl, and truly, or instantly I cast thee into bonds. Without there, ho! a guard and fetters!"

"Promise, or you may tear me limb from limb—ay, draw me with wild horses, yet shalt thou nothing learn. Promise, and I tell all."

The guard rushed in—grim, gloomy-looking fanatics, to whom their leader's merest nod was law—yet she was silent as the grave; and the dark zealot paused in deep perplexity. His brow was stormy as a winter's midnight; his eye cold, hard, and pitiless; his teeth compressed so firmly that his very lips were white as ashes; and his hands clinched, yet quivering with emotion. While he yet doubted, a slow solemn sound came floating down the night wind to his excited ears; it was the village clock striking the second hour past midnight.

"Three hours more," she said, in a low, mournful voice, "three hours more, and nothing will remain of him you *call* your friend, except a little blood-stained clay, which you may—or may not—avenge!"

The muscles of the general's mouth worked violently, his clinched hand gradually opened, the expression of his eye grew softer.

"Noble heart — noble heart!" he muttered; "well hath the prophet spoken, 'a virtuous woman is beyond the price of rubies.'" Then, raising his voice, he said,

distinctly and aloud, "Before the Lord, my Judge, and my Redeemer, and by my hopes of grace, I promise thee. It shall be done as thou wouldst have it. How many, and where lie they?"

"Three hundred horse—in the small town of Wetherby on Wharfe."

"Sound trumpets—boot and saddle! Mine own first ironsides to horse; let them all carry petronels. Despatch! despatch! Saddle me Thunder for the field; I will myself to horse! Find me three trusty guides, that know each yard of country for ten miles around! For life! for life! no tarrying!"

Forth rushed the subalterns; the trumpets flourished, piercingly shrill and stirring; then came the clash of arms, the trampling of quick feet, the glare of torches, the din of confused voices, the pawing and the snort of chargers, and all the thrilling sounds and sights of an alarum at the dead of night.

"One more word, maiden," he exclaimed, while fastening the rivets of his corslet with an impatient hand; "where hold they him in ward?"

"In the courthouse," she answered, "hard by the market-place, and nigh the river bank. And now forget you have beheld me—forget it, and farewell!"

"Nay — nay," he said, "not so. You go not hence save with our escort. Too much risk have you run to-night already."

"No," she replied, "I must be home before you. I lodge not in the town, and I may well be missed. I must be home before you, else will all fail."

"Nay, thou art right in all things," Cromwell answered, "and as thou willest it shall be. Kingsland, conduct the maiden in all honor to her own attendants. Lady," he added, taking her by the hand, with a benevolent expression lighting his gloomy features, "lady, thou art a goodly and a glorious creature, and this night hast thou done a deed worthy the noblest of earth's daughters. A soldier's blessing, although he be not of thy faith nor of thy faction, cannot disgrace or harm thee. The God of Israel bless thee, then, and guide thy feet aright, and give thee peace, and happiness, and understanding. Fare-

well, and doubt not that I will deal with thee righteously; for if I fail thee to transgress my promise, may He whom I profess to serve — with frailty, it is true, and fainting, yet with sincere heart-zeal — do unto me so likewise at mine utmost need, and much more also!"

He let fall her hand as suddenly as he had taken it, and, as if half ashamed of the emotion he had shown, abruptly turned away and scanned the map which lay upon the table with intense scrutiny; while Sibyl, wondering at the singular emotion and unexpected conduct of the hated Independent, silently left the house, to hurry homeward with an easier heart than she had carried to the quarters of the Puritans.

Before half an hour had elapsed, five hundred chosen horsemen were under arms and in the saddle, the very flower of Cromwell's finest cavalry, and he himself, despite his wounds, his arm yet hanging in a sling, mounted and at their head. After a short and hurried conversation with the guides, he gave the word to march, and led them at a rapid trot along the moonlight roads, none knowing, save himself, the object or direction of their route. When they had ridden some six miles upon their way, he halted suddenly; "Is there not hereabout," he said, looking toward the guide, who rode beside his rein, "a path whereby to reach the Wharfe, and ford it here, some mile or so below the town?"

"A half mile farther," answered the countryman, "a lane turns off to the left down to the Flint-mill ford, two miles below the bridge."

"Ho! Captain Goodenough," cried Oliver, "take thou this fellow to the rear, and, as we pass the lane, turn down it with the last troop; tarry not on thy way, but cross the river, and keep the right bank up until thou be within two gunshots of the bridge; there halt till that thou hear my trumpets, and then charge! over the bridge—into the town — and strike straight for the market-place! If that ye be discovered ere ye hear me, delay not, but dash straightway in. If that your guide deceive you, shoot him upon the instant. Be cautious and be quick—away!"

On they went, quickening still their pace, and, as they

passed the lane, the troop appointed to the duty wheeled off, steadily, but without slackening its pace, and hurried on its route.

Another mile was passed, and once again the general halted; "Kingsland and Pearson," he cried, "move to the front; I would hold counsel with ye; and bring the other guides;" then, as his officers arrived, "there be," he said, "two other roads, besides this which we follow, that enter Wetherby this side the river—the great north road from Boroughbridge, and one from Knaresborough yet farther to the west. Goodenough holds the bridge, and I will keep this route. You two must ride across the country till that ye reach these roads. Feel your way down them, each one as nearly as he may unto their outposts; and, when ye hear my trumpets, charge, as I said before, and cut your way straight for the market-place. Kill no more than ye must, and make no prisoners. Keep your men well together, and be steady. Send back your guides to me, each with an orderly, when ye have reached the roads. Ye have but a scant hour to do it, but that is time enow an' ye employ it diligently. By then the moon will set, and we shall have it dark and misty. Be wary, and success is certain. God speed ye, gentlemen. Away!"

And off they rode across the open fields, which stretched, at that time, without fences or enclosures, except a few small drains, for many miles over that fertile district. An hour passed slowly over, and the moon sank, as Cromwell had predicted, into a heavy bed of clouds, yet he moved not. His men were drawn up, all dismounted, but each trooper by his horse, in a small piece of marshy woodland, open to the road, where they could not have been discovered by a chance passenger. The morning grew not lighter yet, for a small drizzling rain began to fall, with a dense fog, rendering objects scarcely visible at ten feet distance. Another half hour passed, and yet no tidings.

"Mount, ho! and blow your matches," exclaimed Cromwell, breaking the silence, which had so long remained uninterrupted by any human sound or whisper. "We must fall on, else shall we be too late, trusting to

fortune and the favor of the Lord that our friends be at their posts. Wheel to the left, ho! Forward — trot!" and he put his horse at once into his swiftest pace. Just as he moved his men the clang of hoofs came rattling up the stony road; it was the guide from Pearson, with an orderly. "All's well," he cried; "stout Captain Pearson hath gained the farther road; Kingsland must needs be at his post; and lo! here comes his messenger."

"Forward, then! forward!" shouted Cromwell, "for lo! there breaks the morning. Forward, and when the outposts challenge us, sound trumpets and shout cheerily!" And on they went, clattering at a furious pace along the broken roads; and now they almost reached the town, the lights of which they might see feebly twinkling through the mist-wreaths. An awful sound broke on their ears, heard fearfully distinct above the din of hoofs and clash of spur and scabbard — it was the first note of the death-bell!

"Gallop! ho! gallop!" Cromwell shouted out, in piercing tones, that thrilled to every heart, plunging his spurs up to the rowel-heads into his charger's side; but his command reached other ears than those of his stout followers.

"Stand, ho!" challenged a drowsy sentinel, whom they had well-nigh passed unnoticed, despite the clatter of their march; "stand, or I shoot!" and, at the self-same point of time, his musket was discharged; but its report was drowned by the heart-thrilling flourish of the trumpets and the repeated war cry of the charging zealots. On every side the trumpets of the general were answered by the simultaneous shouts of the three bands he had detached, by the quick clatter of their horses' hoofs, and the sharp ringing volleys of their carbines. On every side the outposts were cut down, and the town entered sword in hand. The death-bell ceased to toll—the ringers had deserted it in terror. The bugles pealed, and the drums beat to arms, but it was all too late. The few who were on foot were instantly cut down; others came rushing from their quarters half attired, with lighted torches and unbelted brands, only to gaze in mute and unresisting terror on the complete success of the assail-

ants — only to see four gallant troops of horse, wheeling from opposite directions and in resistless numbers into the market-place! — to hear the clang of ax and hammer upon the prison-gates, mixed with the deafening huzzas of the triumphant Puritans! — to mark, by the red glare of many a flambeau suddenly kindled by the troopers, their captive borne in triumph from the cell — which he had never dreamed of quitting but for the place of execution — mounted upon a ready charger, and girt round by a ring of swords that set the very hope of rescue at defiance.

One short note of the bugle, and every torch expired as suddenly as it had been illumed. Another, and the strangers fell into column with the speed of thought, and, filing off at a hard trot, were out of sight so rapidly, that, but for the dismantled gates, the empty dungeon, the decaying brands that smouldered on the ground, and the few scattered bodies outstretched upon the miry pavement never to rise again, all that had passed might have been almost deemed a wild and baseless dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

TEMPTED, BUT TRUE.

Yet not for power—power of herself
Would come uncalled for—but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

TENNYSON.—*Œnone.*

THE terrible campaign of 1644 had ended; not, indeed, with that total overthrow of Charles and absolute dispersion of his party which might well have been looked for after the complete rout of the finest army he had ever been enabled to collect, upon Long Marston Moor, and which would probably have followed had all the generals of the commonwealth been equals—in spirit, energy, and

firm devotion to their cause — to the true victors of that bloody day, Fairfax and Cromwell.

But, in truth, during the years which had elapsed since the uplifting of the royal standard, the aspect of affairs in England had been changed greatly for the worse, and men's opinions had undergone, if possible, a greater alteration. Each party, as is the natural consequence of opposition, whether in argument or armed strife, had but become more desperately wedded to its own principles or prejudices. The king, though he had gained no single step toward a general result of conquest or pacification, was more resolved than ever to come to no terms, save such as he could never reasonably even hope to gain, with his rebellious subjects. The people, meanwhile, were becoming weary of the war, and all the miseries that follow in its train; and seeing that there was no hope that Charles would ever listen either to prudence or to reason until reduced to infinite extremities, were daily, hourly increasing in their animosity to him, and in their readiness to urge on and promote, by every method in their power, the interest of his enemies. The nobles, on the other hand, those even who had been the first and the most zealous to proclaim themselves adherents to the parliament and constitution, the first to buckle on the arms of legalized and just rebellion, perceived at length that, through the self-destructive obstinacy of the king, the civil strife could have no end save in the downfall of the monarchy, and consequent suppression of all aristocratic privilege. They relaxed then their efforts; fought, if they fought at all, with feeble and uncertain spirit, as doubtful whether conquest or defeat would prove to them the greater evil; and would, had they possessed the absolute control, have suffered the war to go out, as it were, for very lack of aliment.

Among the royalists, immediately upon the issue of that bloody field, the gallant Newcastle, justly incensed at Rupert's furious and unmannered rashness, by which, indeed the whole north had been set at stake and lost in one pitched battle, had thrown aside his arms, and crossed the seas to gratify, if it might be, in happier realms, his taste for those accomplishments and arts of

peace which were far more congenial to his improved and courtly intellect than the rude din of camps and foughten fields. The prince, without so much as an attempt to rally his dispersed and shattered forces, fled with all speed toward Chester, while York, relieved in vain, surrendered in a few days to the conquerors of Marston.

Better success, however, than could have been expected, fell to the cavaliers in other portions of the realm. Charles, who, a few days previous to the defeat of his rash nephew, had worsted Waller at Cropredy bridge, now following up his slight advantage by a vigorous and able movement into Cornwall, pressed upon Essex with such skill and perseverance, that the general of the parliament was forced to make a most precipitate escape by sea. Hopeless of bringing off his army, he went on board with a few officers, having first sent away his horse, under command of Balfour, to cut their way as best they might to London — an end which, owing to the shameful revelry of Goring, who suffered them, although forewarned even of the hour when the sortie would be made, to pass his lines unchallenged, he most successfully accomplished — and leaving all his infantry, artillery, and baggage, under Skippon, to take the best terms of surrender they might gain from the king's policy or mercy.

A second desperate drawn battle followed before Newbury, wherein, as they had done in every action, Cromwell's undaunted squadrons carried all before them in that part of the field where they engaged; although at other points the headlong valor of the cavaliers retrieved the day, and gained the doubtful credit of a balanced fight, owing, as it was said, to Manchester's uncertain it not dishonest policy in absolutely prohibiting the leader of the ironsides from making one more charge on the retiring royalists, when, as that officer asserted, a complete victory must have undoubtedly been won by such a movement. After this fruitless struggle, relieving the beleaguered posts of Donnington and Basing House, the king once more took up his quarters for the winter in the loyal town of Oxford, with better hopes than he had entertained since the complete subversion of his party in the north; on

news of which his queen had instantly escaped to France, and he himself had deemed it wise to send the Prince of Wales to Bristol with a separate council and an independent army, judging it hazardous to hold so great a stake as their united safety embarked upon a single venture.

Toward the dead of winter, the armies being both laid up, the Puritan leaders returned to Westminster, to take once more their part in the proceedings of the houses, since they had no more opportunity of active service in the field. Matters in parliament looked wildly; parties ran higher now than they had done at any time, even before the royalists seceded from the councils of the nation; the Presbyterians and the Independents striving with rancorous and bitter energy to gain the upper hand each of the other. Commissioners were indeed sent from both sides to treat for peace, as during the preceding winter, at Uxbridge, but rather to preserve appearances than from the least belief on either hand that they could prove successful in their mission.

Such was the state of things when, on a keen December's afternoon, Arden strolled forth from his lodging under the pressure of uneasy thoughts, to try if exercise and change of scene might banish the dull sense of rooted sorrow, almost amounting to despair, which had possessed his bosom. At first he wandered aimlessly about the streets, until at length he found himself in the long alleys of St. James's Mall, the stage in former days of so much gayety and pomp, but now all gloomy and deserted by every living thing except a few disconsolate and dingy sparrows, huddled together on the leafless branches of the elms, or twittering feebly in the wintry sunshine.

The dull and lonely scenery, the grassplots mantled partially with crisp hoarfrost, the wide canals sheeted with rotten and half-melted ice, the rustic benches white with the slippery rime, the big drops splashing down from off the southern branches of the giant trees, and, above all, the utter solitude, the absence of any human being, harmonized so well with the dark and almost misanthropic mood which had crept on the young soldier,

that he continued for above an hour to stroll to and fro, almost unconscious of the flight of time. He was at length, however, awakened from his revery by the approach of three men walking at a rapid pace toward him, apparently engaged in conversation of the strongest interest. A single glance sufficed to let him recognize the persons of Ireton, Vane, and Cromwell. So deeply were these gentlemen engrossed in their discourse, that it was not till they were on the very point of meeting that Cromwell knew his favorite officer. They did not even then, however, pause; but, with a courteous salutation, passed him, still speaking rapidly in a low tone. After a few steps Oliver quitted his companions, and, turning short around, followed Edgar at so swift a pace that he overtook him almost instantly.

"You are well met," he said, entering without preamble on his subject; "had I not thus, by special favor, it should seem, of Providence, encountered you, I should have sought you in your lodging ere to-morrow morning. There is a great change working; yea! a great change in Israel! And truly it is needed; for, verily, the tares have multiplied among the harvest of the Lord; they have increased fourfold; they have grown up all green, and rank, and flourishing, that they shall overtop the goodly wheat, and choke it down, and triumph over it. But lo! the time is now at hand. The Lord hath borne it in upon our hearts, that we shall purge the field; that we shall purify the threshing-floor, setting apart the good grain from the sinful weeds, that so we may not die, but live!"

"Of what change speak you general?" returned Arden, somewhat coldly; "for, to say truth, I may not comprehend you while you speak thus in parables."

"May not or *will* not—whether?" Oliver inquired, with a solemn sneer curling his lip; and he fixed his piercing eye upon the face of Arden so sternly and so searchingly withal, that few men could have brooked his gaze without confusion; then, seeing that the countenance of Edgar, though firm and fixed, was frank and open as the day, he deigned to speak directly to the point. "Why, see you not," he said, "that an' these generals, these *lords* continue—self-seekers as they be, not holding their eyes

steady and their hearts aright toward the public weal, but turning to the right hand and the left, struggling ever for their own advancement, backsliding, wavering, and fainting at the push of need—see you not that this war shall vex the realm long years, and that the man Charles Stuart must in the end prevail? For, lo you! even now these covenanting, crafty Scots, whom may the Lord confound, are hankering, as the Israelites of old, after the fleshpots of the heathen. I tell you, of a verity, if they might cast the net of their deceptions over this groaning land—even the foul abomination of an established Presbyterian church, sterner than prelacy, yea, more intolerant than papistry itself—they would desert us straightway, and unsheath the sword, edgeless although it be, and wielded by most weak and coward hands, to raise the king unto his former place, and stablish him in all the might, as he is steady in the will, to work upon our heads his ancient tyranny."

"Something of this I have perceived," Arden replied, "and loath am I to own it even to mine inmost thoughts. But, on my conscience, I believe that Manchester and Essex wish not to see the parliament prevail too fully. Nay, more, I grievously suspect the Scottish leaders, and have done so from the beginning. It may be that I wrong them, but I *do* hold that their only object from the first hath been to force the bigotted and iron discipline of their presbytery upon this kingdom, intolerant, inquisitorial, meddling, vexatious, and fanatical. Nor do I think that they would strike one blow for liberty, save in this rooted hope."

You do not, Edgar Arden, you do not wrong them," exclaimed Cromwell, joyously. "I do rejoice that you have read them rightly. And would not you do something, something to free our necks from this most bitter yoke of spiritual bondage, to cast this burden from our consciences—would you not venture somewhat?"

"Much, much!" cried Arden; "I would both do and venture deeply, if I could see the method and the time."

"Verily, I will show thee both," answered the other; "to-morrow do we hold a solemn fast and a soul-searching self-inquiry to the Lord in all our congregations, and all our preachers shall exhort us—truly the Lord hath put

one leaven and the same into the hearts of all, and with it shall we all be leavened—showing us how unjust and scandalous a thing it is that we, the members of the houses, should engross all offices, both of the army and the state; giving a cause to backbiters and to malignants that they should scoff and cry, 'Ha—ha! lovers of gain rather than lovers of the Lord! self-seekers, striving for the soft and elevated places! belly-gods hungering and thirsting for the fat things and the sweet things of the land!'

"Then shall we move before the commons, Sir Harry Vane and I, a self-denying ordinance, whereby no member shall hold, any more, any commission in the armies of the land. So shall these stiff-necked nobles be forced to yield the sway they have so misemployed, and Fairfax, honest and trusty Fairfax, shall take the place of doubting Essex."

For a moment Arden pondered deeply, and it was now his turn to strive to read the countenance of his companion, but all was dark, mysterious, and inscrutable. "Your scheme," he said at length, "your scheme is naught, for by this ordinance you must *yourself* resign your truncheon; and, I care not although I say it, I hold *you* the main pillar of our armies in the field. Your scheme is therefore naught; nor could it pass the lords."

"The lords!" said Oliver, with a grim sneer; "trouble not yourself for the lords! Truly the time hath come when they must do even as the commons bid them. And for the rest, surely there is a way—"

"An *honest* way?" asked Edgar, sharply, "for, to say truth, General Cromwell, I like not these by-paths of counsel; still less like I this calling upon holy names, this feigning inspiration and forging miracles, this quoting and interpreting the word of God to justify things politic and worldly."

"Go to! go to!" cried Oliver, but with a dark and subtle smile; "thou talkest as a babe—yea, as a very suckling, that knoweth not the hearts of men. Know this; all things are honest that are wrought for honest ends. Moreover, many pious souls there be; yea, conscientious, tender, and God-fearing souls, that will not lend themselves to any work, how honest in itself soever, without

they seek the Lord and learn his pleasure. I say there is a way, ay, and a righteous way, whereby we may retain our leading of the new-modelled host, and marshal it to glory."

"How so? I see it not," said Edgar, wholly unconvinced by Cromwell's specious sophistry. "It must be most gross practice."

"Surely, we may resign our sittings in the house," answered Oliver, very slowly, watching the effect of every word upon the face of Arden, "if it be better for the people of the Lord, that we continue with the army."

"And wherefore not they also?"

"Wherefore not—" interrupted Cromwell — "wherefore, but because they, being peers of England, their seats hereditary, their privileges indefeasible—"

"Well, sir," Edgar broke in upon him before his speech was half concluded, "I see your plan, and I believe that you *mean* honestly; nevertheless, I like it not, and I will none of it. I love not devious counsels."

"And will you then fall off?" inquired the other, evidently much annoyed; "will *you*, that have performed such mighty deeds for the good cause, fighting the faithful fight for Israel, will you fall off to those whom you know to be wavering and fickle, if that they be not absolutely traitorous and false?"

"I will do nothing, Master Cromwell, on that you may rely, I will do nothing," Edgar replied, in quiet but stern tones, "that both my head and heart approve not. I may not in my conscience vote for this your measure; for though I quarrel not with the effects, but deem them the most desirable, I do abhor the means. I may not vote against you, for I yet more dislike the course of your opponents. Neutral I will not be; therefore to-morrow I resign my seat. There be not any measures in debate in which I now care to mingle. In matters of religion, my voice is still for universal liberty; all systems of exclusion, whether they be Presbyterian or Papistical, I hold alike despotic, bigotted, and Jesuitical, and I will vote for none of them. I will devote my parts where most they may avail—to the ordering of my soldiery."

"Be it so," answered Cromwell, somewhat relieved;

"be it so, since it may not be, as I should deem for the better. But not the less shall we prevail in this thing, only hold thou my counsels secret."

"I am not wont," said Arden, not a little ruffled, "to fetch and carry; and, as I said before, I do believe that you mean honestly; to-morrow, then, I shall resign my seat, and straight go down to the army."

"Farewell, then, till the springtime; and then, *then*, Edgar Arden, under command of the right gallant Fairfax, full early shalt thou see and own the wisdom of my measures. The next campaign—mark! mark, I say, my words, for they are of the Lord—the next campaign shall be the last for Charles."

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOODS OF THE MAN.

There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great soul of the world
Than is man's custom, and possesses freely
The power of questioning his destiny.
COLERIDGE, FROM SCHILLER.—*The Piccolomini.*

SOME months elapsed, as they had both surmised, ere Arden was again brought into contact with his superior officer; and in the interval, not one, but all of those great changes which the latter had predicted had indeed come to pass. After much fierce contention the self-denying ordinance, although opposed to the utmost by Hollis, Glin, and Stapleton, and all the leaders of the Presbyterian faction, passed both houses; Fairfax was named chief general of the parliament, and by a series of intricate manœuvres, affairs were so arranged that Cromwell, still retaining his commission of lieutenant-general, was not required even to resign his seat in the commons.

It was an evil omen for the royal party that Laud, after remaining in confinement during four whole years in the tower, was now brought to his trial, condemned, and

put to death by ordinance of parliament, having in vain produced a regular and ample pardon, under the king's hand and seal. None, therefore, were surprised that, like all former efforts at a reconciliation, the treaty entered on at Uxbridge utterly failed in its results, the king on one side and the commissioners on the other exhibiting so much of haughtiness and unaccommodating spirit, that, unless by a miracle, no peace could have been possibly concluded. So much time had, however, elapsed in the debates at Westminster, and so late was it in the session ere the ordinance became a law, that the new model of the army was not accomplished till the spring was far advanced; and, ere the Independents were prepared to take the field, Charles had already gained some trivial but encouraging successes.

The town of Leicester had been taken by assault, and miserably sacked by the wild cavaliers, who, as their means decreased, fell more and more into those desperate excesses which rendered, in the end, their very name a byword for debauchery and license; nor this important city only, but several other garrisons had been stormed sword in hand; while the new-modelled army had done nothing but suffer a repulse from Borstall House, and made a most unprofitable demonstration against the university of Oxford.

Having received false tidings that Fairfax had sat down in form before that city, which might be deemed the capital of loyal principles, the king marched hastily with some eight thousand men, hoping to raise the siege, and force the general to a battle ere he should be joined by Cromwell with his cavalry; but hearing, after he had advanced as far as Daventry, that Fairfax was so near him as Northampton, he the same day retreated upon Harborough, intending to fall back to Leicester, where he might draw more infantry from Newark to his banner, and tarry the arrival of his northern reinforcements.

On the thirteenth of June the army of the parliament took up its quarters for the night about a mile to the south of the small town of Naseby, the ironsides, with Arden's regiment of horse, being a little in advance on the right wing of the position, and occupying a command-

ing station on a range of gentle eminences. It was a calm and lovely evening, so still and breathless that the smallest rural sounds, the lowing of the cattle from the rich pastures in the vale below, the bay of mastiffs from the scattered granges, the hooting of the owls from many an ivy-mantled pollard, even the breezelike murmur of the distant river, were clearly audible, in singular but pleasing contrast to the ruder sounds of the nocturnal camp. The moon, in unveiled gorgeousness, was hanging in a sky so perfectly transparent as is but rarely witnessed under the humid atmosphere of England, and millions of bright stars were flashing like diamond sparks in the unclouded firmament. Edgar had only joined that afternoon, and, taking orders from the general in person, had not as yet fallen in with Cromwell; but now, when he had seen his men duly provided with their rations, his horses picketed and well supplied with forage, and all precautions taken needful for a night to be passed under arms, he made his way along the lines toward Oliver's headquarters.

Some two or three tents, rudely pitched about the centre of the ridge, with six or eight fieldpieces in battery before them, and the red cross on the blue field of the Covenant drooping around its staff, from which the gentle air had not the power to move it, readily showed him whither to direct his footsteps; but, somewhat to his wonder, on reaching Cromwell's tent, the sentinel on duty there informed him that the lieutenant-general had gone forth alone, beyond the outposts of the army, to wrestle with the Lord in prayer, even as holy Samuel went forth "to cry unto the Lord his God for Israel, that he might save them out of the hands of the Philistines."

Anxious, however, to see him before the morning, Edgar, inquiring of the sentinels and of the scattered groups of soldiers, who were engaged cooking their evening meal about the watchfires, easily followed on his track, and at last, having proceeded some few hundred yards beyond the farthest outpost, discerned the figure of a man kneeling upon the open plain in the full moonlight, with both his arms outstretched toward heaven. The clear light glanced upon the polished iron of his morion

and breastplate; and, even more than this, the harsh tones of the speaker, as he sent up in vehement profusion his wild supplications, or remonstrances, for such they were in fact, to the throne of grace, announced to him distinctly that he had found the object of his search. Before he reached him Oliver's prayer was ended; and, rising from his knees, he stood, with his feet a little way apart, and planted with colossal strength upon the mossy sod, gazing with an air of calm enthusiasm upon the glistering heavens.

"And thou, bright ruler of my destinies," thus Arden, to his deep astonishment, heard him exclaim, "thou that didst smile upon my natal hour, thou that, through every change and chance of this my mortal course, hast given evident and never-failing tokens both of my weal and woe; thou that, when through long years I wallowed unregenerate and foul in the abyss of low and soul-debasing sin, wert dim and clouded ever with thick darkness; thou that, in after days, when, by the gracious mercy of that long-suffering and beneficent Lord, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live, my soul was touched of grace, and mine understanding enlightened to the sinfulness of my ways, wert seen to shoot forth scintillations pure as the seven living lamps that burn before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; thou that, before the blood-red field of Marston, whereon the Lord vouchsafed unto the humblest of his servants to fight the great fight and to win the crown, even the crown of victory, conjoined with sanguine Mars didst shine preeminent; beam on! beam on, with that serene and placid gorgeousness, which fills my soul with the high confidence of coming triumph! Ha! who goes there?" he shouted, in a sharp, harsh key, strangely at variance with the wild enthusiastic accents of his previous meditations. "Stand, ho! and give the word!"

"The sword of Levi!" answered Edgar, promptly; "lieutenant-general, I greet you on the eve of battle!"

"Ha! Colonel Arden, by the voice," cried Oliver! "Right glad am I now to encounter you. I heard of your arrival, and truly I rejoiced that we should once

more ride together into the strife of men. Surely the gentle beauty of the night hath tempted me to wander forth and commune here alone with mine own spirit. I do profess it is a most fair scene; saw you the stars at any time shine forth more gloriously?"

"It is indeed a night of most unusual beauty for this our English climate," Arden replied, somewhat surprised at the uncommon turn the conversation had thus taken. "I have seen many such, however, in Italy and Spain. But I knew not that you were so deep an admirer of nature. Methought that men had rather been the subjects of your observation."

"It is not that, it is not that," said Cromwell, "although all His creations must needs be worth man's study. But have you no belief in the connection of those brilliant and mysterious twinklers with the career of men, the course of great events?"

"In truth not I," answered the other; "nor do I see how such belief can be consistent with the christian's faith in a supreme and all-commanding Providence."

"But I do," Cromwell interrupted him; "I see not wherefore the Eternal may not divulge a portion of our fates by means of these, the most sublime of his creations; nor wherefore the appointed angel, who ministers to every one of mortals unto righteousness, may not be likewise the presiding spirit over some one of yonder glorious worlds. I do believe it fully; yea! I have proved it. Lo! see you not yon large clear star, there to the east of Lucifer, and higher toward the pole, brighter than all the planets? It shone upon my birth, and from my boyhood upward have I known and marked the face of that fair sparkler, and ever has it varied with the varying of my fortunes — dim and most melancholy in my benighted days of evil, but glorious, as you see it now, when aught of greatness or of glory was in prospect. See how it shoots forth jets of most pure light. No other star doth likewise. Verily, verily, the Lord shall work great things for us to-morrow!"

"I have heard tell of this before," Arden replied—"of this your superstition, for so I cannot but consider it;

and likewise, that you fancy how you saw a vision years ago."

"Fancy! *fancy* I saw a vision?" cried Oliver impatiently. "I tell you, Edgar Arden, as plainly as mine eyes behold you now, I saw that dusky form. As clearly as mine ears drink in your doubting accents, so clearly did I feel the tones of his immortal voice. How should I *fancy* such things? I was then but a boy, a wayward, headstrong, and most ill-conditioned schoolboy. It was a Sabbath night, and I lay wide awake, plotting I know not what of orchard-breaking or of henroost-robbing for the morrow, when suddenly a strange and thrilling fear crept over me. I knew that I was not alone, though I saw nothing. I felt as though a pair of mighty wings were spread above me, chilling my very soul. I would have cried aloud, but my voice choked within me. I would have risen up and fled, but could not move a finger; and yet, although I say it, I was then bolder than my years betokened, and feared not man or devil. It was a night of murky darkness, but suddenly a faint and pallid light filled the whole chamber, not emanating from one brighter point, but uniform as daylight, though very dull and ghastly; my curtains were drawn suddenly asunder, and a tall, misty shape stood in the opening. I tell you I did see it perfectly and plainly, for I did not faint, though my flesh quivered aguelike, and the cold sweat stood in beads upon my brow, and my hair bristled, as instinct with life. There stood it while I could have reckoned twenty, and then a deep, slow voice, of strange and solemn harmony, rolled forth without an effort — 'Arise! arise,' it said, 'thou that shalt be the first in England!' It vanished, and all again was darkness, but the voice was tingling in mine ears when the next sun was high in heaven."

"And do you credit this?" asked Arden, fixing his eyes with something of suspicion on the face of the enthusiast. "Do you trust in this prophecy? Does this *dream* actuate your waking movements?"

"And wherefore not?" said Cromwell; "the elder Brutus, he who made Rome free, was called the First in Rome, and Father of his Country. A man may be the

first, and yet not king, nor tyrant. Cannot you credit this?"

"I fear me," Edgar answered, very gravely, "that this vision *was* a spirit—the evil spirit of ambition! Beware, I say, beware how you give heed to it! Truly there is not much about me of the antique Roman; but did I think, as half I doubt even now, that this same vision were but the working of an unholy thirst for power, which may one day induce you to lay violent hands upon your country's freedom, I have yet so much of the Cassius in me that I would thrust this sword, which I have buckled on to fight your battles, into your very heart, ere you should live to find your vision true!"

"Woe! woe is me, what have I said?" cried Oliver, apparently much moved; "alack! alack! truly the flesh is weak, but strong and sincere is the soul. Well hast thou said, my friend, and rightly wouldst thou do, should I be rendered subject to the temptings of the Evil One. Woe! woe is me, that I should be mistrusted; surely, if this heart be not honest, then there is neither faith nor honesty in man. But thou, Lord, knowest — thou beholdest — yea, thou searchest the most inward thoughts of this thy servant. Continue me, then, oh thou merciful and mighty One, continue me thine instrument, and shield me from the power of the Evil One; and be thy word a lantern to my feet; and keep me, even as I now am, thine, oh Lord, thy servant, and thine only!" and with the words he burst into a violent passion of tears, mingled with sobs so choking and hysterical, that Edgar was alarmed, half for the intellect, half for the health of the strange being in whom he felt so deep an interest.

Within five minutes, however, the ecstacy had passed away, and, as if he had forgotten all that had just occurred between them, Cromwell addressed him now in the decided although quiet accents of command. "Soh! Colonel Arden, you will join your men forthwith. Go over once again your roll-call. See all be in right state for early action. One hour hence report to me your numbers at my tent." And with a slight but courteous inclination, he turned his back, and walked away toward a watchfire round which some dozen of the ironsides were

grouped. Food was before them, ammunition-bread, steaks of beef rudely cooked upon the embers, and a black-jack or leathern tankard of strong ale, while several pipes of Trinidado were sending forth their powerful fumes above the savory odor of the viands.

"Ho! Hezekiah Sin-despise," said Cromwell, addressing a grim-looking trooper — for he knew every one of his men personally and by name—"how fare ye here? Have the knave commissaries dealt with you righteously? Surely you must not fast, else shall the flesh be weak upon the morrow."

"Yea! general," returned the Independent, "'t is very righteous truth. Wilt not thou taste thyself, so shalt thou judge how fares the sturdy but rough-coated private, on whom doth fall the brunt and burden of the service?"

"Take eat!" exclaimed another of the soldiers, tendering to him a wooden platter heaped with beef and bread. "Eat, drink with us to-night, as we shall fight with thee upon the morrow."

"Will I not?" answered Cromwell, seating himself beside the speaker, and helping himself heartily to the plain but wholesome food. When he had finished eating he filled a cup of ale, and, nodding to the troopers, quaffed it until he nearly saw the bottom; then, with a hoarse laugh, "'T were evil manners did I not share with *thee*, Born-again Rumford," he exclaimed, "since thou didst share so courteously with *me*;" and, instantly suiting the action to the word, he chucked the rinsings of the cup full into the broad face and grizzly mustaches of the man who had supplied him with the meat.

"Thou hast it, there; thou hast it fairly, Born-again," shouted the soldiers, much delighted by the practical jest of their stout leader.

"I know not, truly," Oliver continued, with a grim smile, "whether indeed this Rumford hath been born again, either in flesh or spirit; but this I do know of a surety, that he is now Baptized-again — hey, Rumford? Hand me a pipe of Trinidado," he continued, turning toward another of the military saints, who sat near, grinning heart and soul at the rough witticism.

"Think ye now, men, that Ireton—he is your commissary of the horse, I trow, and sees to these your rations — think ye that Ireton, and Desborough, and Rossiter fare anywise more daintily than you do?"

"Ay, marry!" answered Rumford, somewhat sulkily, "the private and the officers be not alike in anything. Saw we not Master Zedekiah, Desborough's secretary, bear, not five minutes since, a right fine haunch of grease, and store of flagons of Bourdeaux into his master's tent? Lo! there go Rossiter, and Jepherson, and Fight-the-good-fight Egerton, to banquet even now upon the fat things of the earth!"

"Ha! is it so?" cried Cromwell, his eye lighting up; "verily, then, the kid shall be preserved from out the spoiler's jaws, and given as a feast unto the shepherds! yea! even unto those who watch! See here, Baptized-again; I go hence straightway to my quarters. Enter thou into Desborough's pavilion, and summon them all instantly to meet me at my tent in council. When ye shall hear three taps upon the kettledrum, then rush in, all of ye, and fall to bravely — spare not to spoil the haunch, nor yet to drain the flagons — I, even I myself, will stand between ye and the fierce wrath of your officers."

"Cromwell! Live Cromwell!" shouted the delighted soldiers; "now may the Lord preserve to us valiant and trusty Cromwell!"

The object of their rude praises turned aside; but, ere he went, another rugged jest displayed yet farther the wild humor, which at times possessed him; for, as he passed behind the back of the tall trooper whom he had addressed as Sin-despise, he took the pipe out of his mouth when he had kindled its contents by two or three quick puffs to a red heat, and struck the bowl so sharply on the rim of the man's corslet, that all the blazing ashes fell down his neck, between the shirt and skin.

"Now may the Devil—" shouted the trooper, springing to his feet.

"Ho! swearest thou? Fy! fy! for shame!" cried Oliver. "Orderly officer, set Hezekiah Sin-despise down in thy book, five shillings for an oath. Truly, thou shalt

no more be known as 'Sin-despise,' but rather as 'Overcome-by-Sin.'"

Again the soldiers roared their merry approbation, till Oliver, surveying with a mirthful aspect the contortions of the singed veteran, and moved to some compassion by his rueful countenance, drew forth his purse, and, taking out the fine, handed it to the non-commissioned officer. "Our discipline must be preserved," he said, "and the foul vice of swearing I do abhor—yea! utterly. But, in that some share of the fault was mine, who tempted the loud railing of this rash Rabshakeh, verily I will pay the sum in which he standeth mulcted. Tush! twist not thyself, man, to and fro, nor grin as though it hurt thee. Methought my ironsides were proof 'gainst fire as well as steel!" and, without farther words, he hastened to his tent, where he found Arden waiting with the list of his returns. "When all the council shall have entered in," he whispered to the sentry at the door, "strike three taps on the kettledrum, and suffer none to come in or to go out after." Scarce had he spoken ere the officers made their appearance, Desborough wearing a marked air of sullen discomposure, and all save Ireton, whose spirit was of a higher and a nobler mould, showing some symptoms of vexation.

"Give you good evening, gentlemen; please you draw nigh to the table," Oliver exclaimed, "and make me your reports. Beyond doubt we shall engage to-morrow." And for well-nigh an hour's space he kept them there engaged in various details of military service, some, truly, of importance, some trivial and almost unmeaning; when at length all was finished. "Soh! we have done at last," he said; "have you supped, gentlemen? So far as goes a crust of bread and cheese, and a good cup of ale — campaigner's fare — I can supply you, if you will tarry here and eat with me."

"Thanks, worthy general," said Rossiter; "but in good sooth, we were just at the sitting down in Desborough's tent, when that your summons reached us. He hath, I know not how, wrung forth a noble haunch of venison and store of Bourdeaux wine from some misproud malignant, here, at Naseby!"

"Soh! soh! right creature comforts—trust Desborough for that!" Cromwell replied; "why spoke ye not of this beforehand? my business might have tarried; but let me not detain you. Farewell until the morrow."

"Not so, good sir," Desborough answered, "please you to walk with us and share our supper."

"Nay, I have supped already," he replied, "with some good fellows of Jepherson's stout regiment. Nevertheless, since you be so pressing, I will e'en walk down and crush one cup of wine with you;" and, without farther words, they all proceeded, conversing gaily as they went, toward the tent of Desborough. They reached it, and how strange a scene was there; the canvass flapping on all sides open to the air, the lamps streaming and flaring in the night wind, the seats around the table occupied by a dozen or so of rough-looking cuirassiers, quaffing the rich wines, hacking the now dismantled viands with knife and dagger, laughing, whooping, and shouting in their joyous revelry, while a score, at the least, of others waited till these had finished, to fall in and take their turns.

"Now shall you see," said Ireton, who understood the scene at half a glance, to Arden, "our stout host, Desborough, foam like a baited bull. This is, I warrant me, one of the general's jests — somewhat rude; yet do the soldiers prize him all the more for them."

"Damnation!" muttered Desborough, in violent though smothered fury, "but this doth pass a joke!"

"Yea, 'tis a *passing* good one!" answered Oliver, with an attempt at wit which drew a laugh from the carousers; but surely thou didst swear; a fine! a fine unto our treasury; look to it, Mr. Commissary! So, now, these excellent good fellows have watched with their lights burning, and their loins girded up, and they have their reward. Art thou an hungered, Desborough? Nay, then, our worthy Ireton will find you rations; less delicate, perchance, than yon fat haunch that was, but savoring more justly of the camp, and more proportionate to the hard messes of your fellow-soldiers in the Lord. Fy! fy! but this was gluttony; and the means, too, if I mistake not, won by extortion. But enough of this.

Off with ye to your quarters, ye well-fed knaves, and snore off this carousal; and ye, brave gentlemen, though supperless, good rest to ye. Right bravely shall we breakfast on the morrow, an' Rupert keep his purpose. The Lord save ye!"

CHAPTER X.

NASEBY FIGHT.

It was a morn of June, lacked but an hour of noon,
When we saw their standards flutter and their cuirasses shine,
The man of blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.
MACAULAY.

At an early hour of the following morning, while the east was yet gray with the lingering shadows of the night, the army of the Independents drew out into line, and formed itself on ground of the most advantageous nature. This was a long range of low hillocks, dominating the whole plain or valley that separates the towns of Harborough and Naseby, the latter lying in the flat a little to the northwest of the parliament's position. Their centre, for the most part, was made up of musketeers and pikemen, with a good park of field artillery, and Fairfax's life-guard in the reserve, the whole commanded personally by that true gentleman and gallant soldier. The right wing was composed of Cromwell's ironsides, with Rossiter's and Arden's lighter regiments; while the left, consisting likewise all of horse, was under Ireton's direction.

All their arrangements were completed before the first flush of daylight broke through the leafy screens of woodland which fringed the eastern verge of that wide champaign; but soon the thin clouds that were scattered over the summer sky assumed a rosy tinge; a flood of golden light succeeded, and then the great disk of the sun himself rushed up in living splendor from the low horizon.

The vapors gradually melted from the lowlands, and disclosed a beautiful expanse of rural scenery; deep velvet pastures studded with noble trees, green hedges rich in the flowery garniture of spring, masses of forest trees throwing their dark blue shadows in long checkered lines across the laughing meadows, all sparkling with the morning dew-drops, all clothed, as with a radiant mantle, in gay and gorgeous sunshine. The cattle lowed in the abundant valleys, the lark sprang upward from the pearly sod, the rooks sailed forth upon their matin voyage, their harsh voices pleasingly mellowed by the distance, the hares limped through the young wheat, scattering the dew from the thick herbage in lengthened mazes; but not one sound or sight was there betokening anything but happiness and peaceful quiet.

The royal host, meanwhile, was also in array some six miles distant, on a height just south of Harborough, and posted yet more strongly than their enemies, could the mad impetuosity of those whom Heaven had marked out for destruction have tarried to avail itself of their advantage. But as the day drew on, Rupert, who led the cavalry of the king's right, leaving the centre under Lord Astley, and the left commanded by the noble Langdale, still in position on the hills, with the life and horse guards in reserve, dashed forth, two thousand strong, to reconnoitre. About the same time Arden's regiment had been detached for a like purpose; but that wary partisan, feeling his way with caution through the wood-roads and defiles of the valley, easily detected the advance of the royalists, himself unperceived. Placing three troops in ambush, with instructions to check the prince's march by one deliberate volley, and then to fall back on the spur, he drew the rest off, and in a short half hour had the satisfaction of collecting his whole force under the guns of their position, Rupert having been fairly staggered by the fire of his skirmishers.

Still, with his wonted obstinacy, that rash leader persisted in believing that the Puritans were in retreat, and despatched message after message, to order first, and then to hurry the advance of the main army, which left its vantage ground and fatally descended into the open

plain; so that, before three hours had elapsed, the generals of the parliament might see the whole of the king's host rushing like birds into the fowler's net. With admirable foresight Fairfax resolved to suffer them to clear the broken country ere he should attack them; seeing that, if defeated, the enemy must be cut off among the lanes and passes, which would be choked with fugitives the instant that the battle should be turned into a rout. The ground immediately below the hill was open, as was the whole width of the slope, excepting two or three stout timber fences and a group or two of trees, which were at once pulled down or felled by Ireton's pioneers, leaving as fair a field for the encounter as ever was defaced and trampled into gory mire by the death-shock of thousands.

A little after ten on that bright summer morning, Rupert's bold cavaliers had cleared the woodlands; the heads of Astley's columns were seen slowly taking up their ground, and wheeling into line to form the centre, while Langdale with his northern horse was toiling at a full mile's distance in the rear to bring up their field-ordnance. Still no material opposition was offered to the royalists, except that now and then a solitary cannon belched forth its snow-white cloud, and hurled its shot with terrible precision into the crowded files as they debouched upon the plain.

But now the trumpets of Sir Marmaduke were heard upon the left, and he appeared with all his Yorksire chivalry; though still the cannon of the cavaliers were at the least a mile behind, encumbered by the fat loam of that fertile district. Still the impetuous Rupert paused not; the instant that the cavalry of Langdale came into view upon the left, his bugles sounded for the charge; and with a cheery shout, leading his fiery squadrons, himself the foremost man, he hurled himself against the horse of Ireton with the velocity and brightness of a thunderbolt. Forward they rushed, a torrent of plumes, scarfs, and rich embroidery, their brandished rapiers glittering aloft like lightning, and their high-blooded chargers tearing the turf to atoms in their furious speed. Such was the fury of their onset, that, neglecting to discharge their

carbines, they plunged at once into the closest conflict. There was a clang as of a thousand smiths plying their iron trade! a shout that was heard, as men say, at Harborough! And brave although they were, stubborn and resolute, the cavalry of Ireton wavered; in vain their high-souled leader strained every nerve and bled at every pore; now here, now there; rallying, shouting, charging; in vain he crossed swords with the fiery prince, and checked him for one moment; they bent, they broke, they fled. Then flashed the pistol-shots, and in unbroken force over them swept the cavaliers! The ground was cumbered with the slain; but still, over the dead and dying, over the voiceless trumpet and the tattered banner, over the mute dismounted ordnance, amid the groans and blasphemies, the shivering clash of steel, the neigh of maddened chargers, and the wild shouts of his victorious troopers, on charged the daring leader! on! fetlock deep in gore!

"Now, an' he wheel upon our flank, the battle is half lost already," hissed the deep tones of Cromwell in the very ear of Arden; "but lo! the Lord hath blinded him —the God of hosts hath robbed him of his understanding! See where he drives along, heedless of aught save massacre and havoc! Ho! by the light of heaven this day shall crown the whole."

And, in good truth, neglecting all, wild as the whirlwind, that destroys and still sweeps on, bearing destruction it knows not and it recks not whither, Rupert pursued the flyers. Mile after mile they fled; mile after mile he followed; beyond the heavy ordnance, beyond the baggage of the parliament, cheering until his throat was parched, and his voice clove to his jaws; slaying until his sword was blunted, and his arm weary and exhausted. Scarce five troops of the whole left wing had held their ground, and these under the valiant Ireton, as, fired by the success of their companions, Astley's stout infantry came steadily and firmly onward, charged gallantly upon a stand of pikes. They were hurled backward as from a castle wall; and still that deep array of pikes rolled onward.

They rallied, and again they charged, driving their

horses in upon the serried spears, and firing their pistols in the faces of the sturdy footmen. But the cavaliers received them as the bull receives the mastiff, and hurls him from his unscathed front. Their leader was dismounted and made prisoner, their bravest were stabbed down and mangled by the goring pikes; they scattered and fled diverse. But now the musketry awoke, mixed with the louder bellowing of artillery; and, save the rolling smoke-wreaths which packed above the hosts in the calm hush of the hot noontide, and the red glare that ever and anon surged upward, and now the waving of a standard, and now the flash of wheeling weapons half seen among the volleying clouds, nought could be now descried.

Yet still the royal foot pressed on, unbroken and invincible; and Fairfax, though his lines fought stubbornly and well, and formed again when shaken by the musket-buts and halberts of the royalists, who hardly fired a shot, still fighting hand to hand, and poured their volleys in deliberate yet fast, felt that he still was losing ground, and that the vantage of the hill alone preserved him. On the right of the parliament's array the conflict had been long delayed, for Langdale had scarce formed, even when Rupert's charge had pushed the horse of Ireton clear off the field; and Cromwell dared not flank the foot of Astley, lest he should be in turn outflanked by Langdale.

But now, with kettledrum and trumpet, and shot of carbine and of pistol, Sir Marmaduke advanced upon the gallop; and Cromwell, tarrying not to receive his charge, swung forth his heavy squadrons, with a thundering hymn, to meet him. An officer rode forward from the Yorkshiremen, as both lines halted to reload, and Oliver dashed out in person to encounter him. Their pistols were discharged in vain, for Cromwell's bullet glanced from the corslet of the cavalier, and the other fired at random. Then blade to blade they met; a dozen passes flashed with the speed of light between them; their horses wheeled and bounded obedient to the bit; Oliver missed a parry, and his morion with the chin-strap severed fell clanging to the ground; but, without hesitation,

in he went, and hailed so thick a storm of blows upon his foeman, that he beat down his guard and hurled him headlong. The whole passed in an instant; before another had elapsed the adverse lines were mingled; yet, as they closed, Born-again Rumford sprang to earth, caught up the general's morion, and tossed it to his saddle-bow.

Hastily, as he gallopped on, shouting his battle anthem, and still at every shout striking a cavalier down from his saddle, he threw the morion on, but with its peak behind, and so unwittingly fought on through all that deadly strife. Equal in numbers and well-matched in spirit, the tug of war was dubious and protracted between the Yorkshire horse and the unconquered ironsides; but, in the end, Cromwell's enthusiastic energy prevailed, and Langdale, fighting to the last, was driven from the field. Then! then was the superior moral force of Oliver's men proved beyond doubt. Obedient to the first word, they drew off, careless of plunder or pursuit, although their blood was stirred almost to phrensy by the protracted struggle and by the heat of their religious zeal.

"On! Arden, on!" Oliver shouted, as he halted his own five regiments. "Pursue—pursue! suffer them not to rally; support him, Rossiter; away! Break them to pieces; scatter them! The Lord of hosts hath given them a prey into our hands! All glory to the name of our God!"

And, as he spoke, he wheeled at once upon the flank and rear of Astley's infantry, which still maintained the conflict in the centre, slowly but steadily forcing their way against the stubborn valor of the Puritans.

One hope remained for Charles; one only! In the reserve himself, with his lifeguard, commanded by Lord Lindesay, and his own picked horseguards, his *troupe dorée* of nobles, under the Earl of Litchfield, and Rupert's best foot regiment, in all some thirteen hundred men, fresh and unwearied, who had not, on that day, unsheathed a sword or pulled a trigger, he had a fair occasion to draw out and fall upon the flank of Cromwell, as he swept round to charge the foot; and so, to do him but free justice, he proposed.

Bidding his trumpets sound, and drawing his own ra-

pier, sheathed as he was in glittering steel from crest to spur, conspicuous by his broad blue scarf and diamond George, he plunged his rowels into that snow-white charger, rendered immortal by the deathless pencil of Vandyck. His pale and melancholy features transiently lighted up by strong excitement, "Follow me," he exclaimed, "follow me, all who love Charles Stuart."

Full of ecstatic valor, they sprang forth; another instant would have hurled them on the unexpecting and unguarded flank of Oliver, who was already hewing his way, crimson with blood from plume to saddle-bow, through the now reeling infantry. The charge *must* have been perilous to Cromwell in the extreme; *might* have destroyed him utterly; and, had it so fallen out, the victory was the king's, for Rupert's scattered troopers were even now beginning to return, and Fairfax could scarce hold his own. But the charge was *not* made.

Whether from folly, cowardice, or treason, it now can never be discovered, the Earl of Carnewarth, a mere cipher in that band of England's noblest peers, seized on the bridle of the king. "Saul o' my body," he exclaimed, in his broad Scottish accent, "will you, then, go upon your death this instant?" and, ere the hapless monarch could comprehend his meaning or arrest the movement, he dragged his charger toward the rear.

Then, on the instant, a strange panic fell on all around, so that they fled upon the spur, although no enemy was near them; and though, at length, the king's exertions, who spurred through the ranks beseeching them to stand, and even striking at the fugitives in impotent but noble indignation, brought them to rally and ride back toward the field, the moment had gone by!

It was too late! For Fairfax, when he saw how Cromwell had succeeded on his right, and felt the consequences of his charge upon the royal foot, in the disorder of that sturdy mass, moved down at once his own lifeguard from the reserve, and brought it into action. The prince had, indeed, just returned from his insane pursuit; but his men, deeming that their part was played for that day, could not be brought to form again or charge by any effort of their leaders.

And now but one battalion held its ground a solid square of foot, presenting an impenetrable front of pikes on every side to the assailing horse, while from its inner ranks it poured a constant shower of balls, that mowed down all before it. Cromwell, meantime, was overthrowing everything, traversing Astley's line from the left endwise toward the centre, when Fairfax, wheeling his lifeguards round upon the rear of that undaunted square, charged it himself in front. Two horses were shot under him; but, a third time remounting, he brought up his men, though shattered by the constant volleys, to renewed exertion. In the last deadly rush his helmet was torn violently off by a pike's point; the colonel of his lifeguard proffered his own; but no! bareheaded as he was, he dashed upon the spears; he hewed his way into that serried band; with his own hand he cleft the ensign of the regiment, who crossed his path, through morion and scull down to the very teeth; he waved the captured banner round his head, and threw it to a private for safe keeping, who afterward would fain have claimed the honor.

That line of pikes once broken, in swept the Independents with the rush of a springtide; and, where it fought, that firm battalion, refusing quarter and resisting to the last, was trodden to the earth, annihilated, but unconquered.

The victory was complete, the rout disastrous! Even to the walls of Leicester Cromwell's fierce zealots did execution on the flying cavaliers; from three miles south of Harborough to nine beyond it, the country was one widespread scene of flight, and massacre, and havoc. Five thousand of the royalists were slain or taken, from an army which had mustered but eight thousand in the morning. Two hundred wagons, laden with arms and baggage, all the artillery and colors, the royal standard, and the king's own carriage, fell to the victors' share; and, above all, that fatal cabinet of letters, which—though, with a delicate and generous point of honor not often to be met with in such times, Fairfax declined to open them—when published by the orders of the parliament, proved, past all doubt or question, the utter insincerity of Charles; and his resolve—as firm at the last hour as when he first

set up his standard--of reigning, if at all, a monarch irresponsible and absolute.

That victory decided the campaign, and that campaign the cause of England's freedom.

CHAPTER XI.

A GOOD MAN'S DEATH-BED.

> There *is* confusion worse than death,
> Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
> Long labor unto aged breath,
> Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars,
> And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars.
>
> TENNYSON.—*The Lotos Eaters.*

THE action, having raged incessantly from ten o'clock till one, sank into sudden silence after the charge of Fairfax, which, like a hurricane, swept all before it; and, before another hour from that time had elapsed, the field was utterly deserted, except by those who, having fallen in the full tide of violence and fury, now slept as soundly and as well upon the gory turf as though they had departed from their peaceful beds amid the weeping ministry of friends; or those less fortunate, who lay hopelessly writhing in their mortal agonies, "scorched with the death thirst," and torturing the tainted air with their unheeded lamentations.

The hot sun poured his steadiest and brightest rays over that scene of carnage, glancing as if in mockery upon the gorgeous dresses, the rich armor, and the noble steeds, lately so full of fiery life and beauty—which shed but now a halo of false glory over the horrors and the misery of warfare. The round-heads had withdrawn to their encampment on the hills, and were recruiting themselves, after the heat and labors of the day, in that death-like and absolute repose which is the sweetest balm to soul and

body, equally exhausted by the tension of unnatural excitement.

No plunderers, those human vultures that haunt the battle-field to render horror yet more horrible, crept stealthily among the dying and the dead; for such was the severe and ruthless discipline of Cromwell, that the few sordid spirits who necessarily mingled with the high enthusiasts of freedom and religion, dared not even by night, much less in broad daylight, for their lives, to exercise their odious calling.

But the ravens had already flocked in hundreds to the plain, lured by the scent of carnage from the wide woodlands of Northamptonshire and Huntingdon, and now sat perched upon the neighboring trees, scarcely waiting, until life should be extinct, to commence their loathsome meal, while several large kites and buzzards sailed slowly round and round in lofty circles, as fearing to alight while any breath or motion remained to their intended victims.

Such was the aspect of the ground across which Edgar led his men, returning from the first pursuit of Langdale's cavalry, which he had urged, his military ardor tempered by christian mercy, no farther than was needful to prevent their rallying that day; and it had given him more pleasure than he had felt for many a month to see with what a generous and British sentiment his men, though hot in blood, the most part wounded more or less severely, and all exasperated by the fall of many a gallant comrade, refused, even when urged by the fierce exhortations of their more fanatical commanders, to strike an unresisting foeman. While they fought front to front, their hearts were hardened and their hands unmerciful; but when the rush and fury of the conflict had passed over, they felt that those poor fugitives were countrymen and brothers. How trumpet-tongued does this fact cry aloud in the behalf of those much slandered Independents, whom it has pleased the writers of grave, sober history, all either Prelatists or Presbyterians, to represent as stern, morose, blood-thirsty, and remorseless.

In the protracted fight and in the hotly-urged pursuit eight hundred only of the royalists were slain, and of these more than three-fourths occupied the ground where

on they fought, cut down, *flagrante prælio*, with weapons in their hands; while Rupert's onset, and the massacre which followed it, needlessly savage and unsparing, alone cost Ireton's brigade more lives than the whole royal loss! The prisoners, not the slain, the prisoners and the results were the true tests and trophies of the victory at Naseby.

But these were not the thoughts which crowded on the mind of Edgar as he rode sorrowfully back across the red arena of his party's triumph; he looked upon the dead, as they lay stiff and cold, outstretched in serried ranks, even where they fought and fell, like swathes before the mower's scythe, their feet toward their foemen, their grim and gory faces turned up reproachfully toward the placid heaven, their backs upon their native earth, and every wound in front; and, as he looked, in very bitterness of heart he beat his bosom with his hands till his steel corslet clattered. Not one of these but died, in his own creed, self-justified; not one but deemed himself a patriot and a martyr; the Churchman as the Puritan; the fiery loyalist as the severe republican; each battling for his country's right; each honestly believing his opponent the rebel or the tyrant! Alas for human reason! Alas for human error! Alas for vanity and ignorance, for blindness and presumption! Alas for right and wrong—for virtue and for vice! Where, where on earth shall we prove the distinction, how test them here below, save by the arbitration of the false harlot fortune, save by the worthless touchstone of success?

At every step his charger's hoof plashed with a sickening sound in the dark curdled gore that flowed commingling from the wounds of that fine aristocracy, that old high stock of English gentlemen, polished in courts, athletic and well-skilled in every manly feat or rural exercise, second to none as scholars in the forum or as soldiers in the field, lowly in bearing to the low, open and frank among their peers, haughty and proud to their superiors! —and of that independent yeomanry, fearless, and generous, and free, remote alike from insolence and cringing, dauntless and stanch in war, blunt and sincere in peace, the children, tillers, owners of the soil! both races equally

"England's peculiar and appropriate sons, known to no other land." And wherefore lay they here, never to gladden hall or cottage more, their energies, their virtues, their devoted love, lost to their native land forever?

Was it, indeed, for England's good, was it, in truth, for the pure cause of liberty that they had fallen there, self-immolated victims, or was it but for man's insatiate ambition? Was it, indeed, a trial between the principles of tyranny and freedom, or a vain struggle between this and that oppressor? A conflict between principles of legalized authority and arbitrary sway, or a mere strife between the interests of Cromwell and Charles Stuart?

Such were the gloomy thoughts that sat so heavy at the heart of the young conqueror; such the unanswered doubts that led him almost to distrust himself, almost to curse the hour when he had joined the standard of the parliament; but it was not long ere more immediate cares, sorrows more near and kindred, diverted, if they could not overpower, the half prophetic achings of his patriotic soul. The course which Langdale's fugitives had taken, far to the right hand of the field, prevented him on his return from meeting the main tide of the king's army, which, scattered irretrievably, covered the plain toward Harborough. He therefore rode directly to the post of Cromwell. It was near three of the afternoon when he arrived, and found the leader of the ironsides mounted again and at the head of his brigade, refreshed by their brief halt, about to set forth instantly in the pursuit. Before he started on his march, however, he handed several letters to an orderly dragoon, who stood, booted and spurred, with a broad leathern belt and a dispatch bag buckled round his waist, waiting his orders.

"This," he said, "this to the honorable William Lenthall, the speaker of the commons house of parliament—with your own hand, remember, your own hand!—this to the worshipful Lord Say—this to good Master Milton—and now get you gone; let not the grass grow under your horse's hoofs—be swift and trusty. Ha! Colonel Arden," he continued, his brow overclouded as he saw him, "a word with you apart." Then, as he drew him to one side, "truly the Lord," he said, "hath blessed the

general cause with mighty triumph; I may say with a great and crowning mercy; and, therefore, it behooves us not, with weak and fainting hearts, to sorrow overdeeply for our own private griefs. Surely whom the Lord loveth most he chasteneth. Is not this righteous truth?"

"Undoubtedly," Edgar replied, not unsurprised by the peculiar manner of his leader; "undoubtedly it is; but wherefore say you this to me?"

"Yea! and he tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb. So may he temper it to thee, humbly and fervently I trust, honest and valiant friend, in thy time of affliction. Much have I prayed and wrestled with the Lord, since I did hear—"

"What—what? I pray you speak, lieutenant-general, if you know aught concerning me or mine. There needeth not this tampering with the subject; I can endure to hear anything of affliction human tongue can tell me."

"Be you so strong?" said Cromwell; "man, then, your heart; for, of a truth, your father is a prisoner in the camp, sore wounded—ay, unto death, I fear me."

"Where lies he?" Edgar inquired, with a voice so preternaturally calm that Oliver himself gazed at him wondering. "Hath he had any help?"

"I caused him to be borne," Oliver answered, "down to the village yonder, even unto the house of the Episcopalian priest; two of his own domestics are about him, and General Fairfax hath sent his own chirurgeon; you were best hasten, though, if you would see him living. I march forthwith; but tarry you behind until the fourth day hence—so long may I dispense with you. Then join me at the half-way house 'twixt Harborough and Leicester, at the first hour after noon. Farewell, and may the Lord look down on you!" The trumpets sounded, and the ironsides filed off at a sharp trot, and Edgar, mounting hastily on a fresh horse, and calling several of his body-servants to attend him, rode furiously away along the broken lanes toward Naseby.

The vicarage was a low rustic tenement, distinguished from the neighboring cottages by nothing but its superior neatness, and its close vicinity to the square ivy-mantled

tower, and the yew-shadowed yard, with its low mossy graves, of the small village church. A noble lime-tree, with myriads of bees humming and revelling amid its scented blossoms, overhung the grassplot in the front, and a thick growth of honeysuckle crept over the whole building, curtaining porch and roof with its close-matted verdure, and peeping with its honeyed trumpets through the latticed casements. Each hut and cottage through the hamlet had been converted into a temporary hospital for the reception of the wounded from the near battle-field; but, by the group of horses, guarded by a stout knot of troopers, and the two sturdy sentinels who kept the door, the son knew instantly that here lay his father. Curbing his horse so violently up that he had well-nigh fallen on his haunches, he sprang down, and rushed under the low doorway. Just as his foot was on the threshold, a person whom he judged to be the surgeon was passing outward.

"How fares he?" Edgar gasped, the words half choking in his throat; "how fares your patient? Have you any hope?"

The man of healing shook his head. "None—not the slightest," he replied; "the ball hath severed all the main intestines. The hemorrhage has ceased externally, and he is easier now; mortification must ensue; he cannot live six hours. I have done all I may in quieting his agonies; man can no more."

Bending his head to veil the bitter anguish that racked his manly features, Arden passed onward; directed by a gesture of the silent sentinel, he entered the small parlor; and there, upon a temporary couch, the window-curtains drawn aside, the lattices thrown open to admit the slightest draught of air that might be stirring, the old steward of his household wiping the death-sweat from the massive brow and long gray locks of his loved master, while the big tear-drops fell like rain down his own withered cheeks, and the white-bearded vicar kneeling in silent prayer beside the death-bed of the cavalier, there lay his father, with his high features pale and sharpened by the near approach of death, and the froth gathering round his bloodless lips, and the dark drops of icy perspiration bursting from every pore of his broad temples.

No groan or murmur passed the mouth of the calm sufferer, but one sad, querulous, and oft-repeated cry, "Comes he not yet?—not yet?" but when the foot of Edgar, lightly although he set it on the floor, clinked with its jingling spurs upon his ear, he started half erect, and drew his hand across his eyes as if to clear away the gathering mists. "'T is he," he cried, in tones distinct and clear from the excitement of the moment, a faint flush lighting up his ashy cheeks, but instantly departing, "'tis he at length; thank God! my son!" and into that son's arms he sank, and lay there as contentedly as though no cloud of anger or mistrust had ever come between them, smiling up with a faint but most kind smile into his face, and clasping his convulsed and trembling hand with all the little strength his mortal wound had left him. For many moments Edgar could find no voice; his whole frame shook with agony; he sobbed as though his very heart would burst, gazing upon the countenance of that loved parent with dry and burning eyes, and a throat choked by the convulsive spasms of a tearless sorrow.

"My boy, my own boy, Edgar," the old man faltered forth, at length, "take not on thus—oh! take not on thus bitterly. 'Tis but the course of nature. The old must die before the young; and I—why I have fallen full of years and full of honor, although myself I say it—and I am glad to die thus—*thus*, with your arms about me, Edgar. But I have much to say to you; and I can feel that my time grows very short to say it. Our reverend friend, to whom I owe so much, good Master Winterfield, will pardon us a little while; and Anthony, old, faithful Anthony, will leave us. We have not met in many days, and we would fain be private ere we part," and his voice failed a little, and a tear stood in his clear gray eye; "part, as we must, forever. We will recall you," he continued, "presently, for I would fain pray with this holy man ere I go hence to stand before my Maker." There was a pause—a long, sad pause, as all obeyed his words, broken by nothing but the hard breathing of the wounded man and the strong sobbing of the mourner.

"Edgar," the old man said at length, "are we alone? Have they all left us?" and then, his question being an-

swered, "This is a sorrowful yet a most happy meeting; for I feel, I feel here," and he laid his hand upon his breast, "that that kind heart of yours has pardoned all the wrongs, the cruel and unmanly wrongs, which I have heaped upon you. Is it not so, my boy, my kind and noble boy?"

"Oh! speak not thus," he answered, when he could force a word, "oh! speak not thus, my father; you have been ever good; too generous! too good! 'T is I—'t is I alone, may Heaven forgive me, that have been to blame. Say only that you pardon me, and bless me, oh, my father."

"No! no!" exclaimed Sir Henry, with more of energy than he had spoken yet. "I will *not;* I do *not;* for I *have* nought to pardon. Never, never from your earliest years, have I had cause for anything but joy and pride in you. And you were—yes, you were the joy, the pride, the only anchor, the last stay of my lone widowed heart, till England became mad, and this accursed and unnatural war rushed over us, tearing asunder every gentle link and blighting every warm affection. But I have nothing, even here, to pardon—for I have been, even here, alone to blame! But I—I too was mad!"

"Oh! no!" cried the repentant son; "it was my duty to obey you; to bear with you; to do, in everything, your bidding—"

"Not so!" Sir Henry once more interrupted him. "'T is no man's duty to obey in things against his conscience; and I was but a fool, an obstinate and merciless old fool, that would not even hear you. Nay, more! nay, more!" he cried, wringing his hands with mental torture, "rash, miserable sinner that I am, I would have slain you but for that sweet girl—slain *you*, that would have never been within my power but for your self-devoting efforts to preserve me. And I *have* slain your quietude, your peace of mind forever! blasted your hopes of fireside happiness, banished you from the dwelling of your fathers, robbed you, ay, robbed you of your heritage, divorced you from your bride, cut short your hopes of leaving your high name to sons as glorious as yourself. All this—all this, and much more have I done—much more!"

As he spoke, he sank back quite exhausted by his own vehemence; but, in a moment, disregarding the entreaties of his son that he would not wear out his faculties with this most needless passion, "I will—I will," he answered; "I will go through with my confession. Reach me that cup, and hear me;" he drained the draught of some mild opiate mingled with wine and water, and proceeded. "Much more of deadly sin than this! I am the murderer of Sibyl." For an instant Edgar fancied that his intellect had failed him, and gazed hopelessly upon his face; but there was no glare of insanity, no idiot vacancy in those high pallid features. "Yes!" he continued, "I have murdered her. Have I not seen her growing paler day by day, and thinner, and more delicate and frail? Have I not seen her pining hourly away, withering beneath the blight of her affections, like flowers beneath the earliest frost winds, and yet, at every hour, more patient, and more angel-like, and more unearthly in her pure, holy loveliness? and I have done this also—this foul and gradual murder! and she will waste away before her time, and sink by inches into the cold dark grave, blessing her slayer as she dies! And thou, too, thou, my son, wilt live a sorrowing and solitary thing; for thy strong, noble soul will not succumb to any violence or spite of fortune; alone upon the earth, like the last oak of a Druid grove, when all its brother trees have fallen by the woodman's ax, magnificent and flourishing and stately, yet sad in all its dignity, friendless, companionless, alone! and with the worm, the never-dying worm, busily gnawing at its heart—yet happier than thee in this, that 't was not by a father's hand its green companions fell; not by a father's hand that the destroying worm was thrust into its bosom! No, no! it cannot be—you can *not* pardon me!"

"All this," said Edgar, calmly, yet much moved, though smothering his emotion; "all this is but the work of Heaven. The Lord hath willed it so, and we are but the instruments, the wretched instruments, within the hollow of his hand. If you have erred, as I say not you have, you erred in honor, and believing yourself justified; but if it be a comfort to you, hear me now, on my knees, be-

side your dying bed, declare, that never, never, for one short moment, have I felt any wrath or bitterness, never known any feeling toward you, dearest and most honored father, save the most deep heart-springing reverence and love. Sorrowed I have, and deeply, that you misjudged my actions, and disapproved the course my conscience bound me to pursue; but never have I thought of you as wronging me; never presumed, nor even wished to blame you. But yet, if there be aught for which you need forgiveness from a child, with all my heart, with all my soul, in sight of men and angels, I bless you and forgive you, oh my father."

"And bless *you*," cried the old man, "my noble-hearted boy. Heaven bless you—and it will—it *must* bless such as you, and prosper you with all its choicest stores, and make you tenfold compensation for your past and present sorrows;" and he drew down the lips of Edgar to his own, and clasped his arms about his neck, and their tears mingled long and silently, and their prayers went up together to the throne of mercy; and with those tears and that embrace, the bitterness passed by, the iron was drawn out from the old warrior's soul.

The clergyman returned, the simple but affecting service of the church was feelingly performed, the last most holy rite partaken, both by the son and sire, the servants were called in, the faithful followers of their lord through weal and woe, and a faint smile, a sad farewell, a kindly pressure of the honored hand, dismissed each, weeping, not as for a master, but rather as for a friend and father, from the low chamber; and once again the father and the son were left in solitude.

There they remained for hours; the old man, while his painful breathing shook the couch beneath him, calm, patient, and serene—the stately son bowed down, and bent, as if by age, clasping the languid hand that grew at every instant sensibly colder and more pulseless, and sorrowing as one who would not be consoled, although he choked his anguish, lest it should but increase his father's sufferings.

The bright warm sun had long since sunk into the west, and his last flush had faded from the sky; yet so

mild was the evening air that every lattice was still thrown wide open, and the rich odor of the woodbine and sweetbrier rose more profusely on the senses, when the plants were steeped in the pure dews of summer. And now the dark blue skies grew gradually lighter, as the moon, near her full, soared slowly and serenely over the distant trees. There was a whispering of the breeze in the top branches of the lime, and from the odorous shrubs in a far corner of the garden a solitary nightingale, awakened by the glorious lustre of the planet, started at once into its wild and melancholy flood of song.

The dying man, who had sunk into a long and tranquil slumber, moved now uneasily; he made an effort to turn over, and the pain caused by the motion aroused him. "Sibyl," he muttered, hardly yet awake, "Sibyl, your song is wondrous sweet to-night, but why so sad? it should be gay as summer after this blessed union. Ah!" he continued, "ah!" as consciousness returned, "I dreamed—I have slept pleasantly, and dreamed a most delicious dream. Is it late, Edgar?"

"The clock hath just chimed ten," Edgar replied, "I would have called for lights, but feared to waken you; shall I now do so?"

"No," he said faintly, "no, it matters not now. How calm it is, and sweet. The blessed moonlight streams in through the casement like Heaven's own mild forgiveness into a sinner's bosom. Edgar, when I am gone, say to my poor, poor Sibyl, that, on my happy death-bed, my sole regret was that I could not join her hand with yours forever. She will be yours now, *now* that this miserable war is ended; for it is ended, Edgar, and I regret its termination less that I have lately seen much in Charles Stuart—in the king—that I had disbelieved or shut my eyes upon before. He hath, I must confess it, dealt insincerely with his nearest counsellors. He hath kept up a secret intercourse with the wild Irish rebels, through that ill-minded Antrim; and, I much fear me, he was privy to and instigated their first bloody rising under the bigoted and barbarous O'Neill. Weak, obstinate, and prejudiced he is, beyond all doubt, proud and uxorious.

"I know that he stands pledged in private to his queen

never to give peace to his people unless by her consent, and all this is done against the counsels and without the knowledge of those men who have a right to counsel him, ay! and to know his measures, since for him they have risked their all!—done in deep malice to his enemies—in deeper guile to whom he calls his friends! Out! out! I say, upon such kingcraft! A good man he may be, but—it will out—a bad king! But enough of this. She will be yours, and you will both be happy yet, as I am now, most happy! How soothing is that sad bird's note; I could almost believe it is prophetic—how beautiful—how beautiful!"

He was again for some time silent, as though absorbed in listening or in thought; and Edgar, who well knew his end was very near at hand, was motionless, and almost breathless; his heart was far too full for words. At length the old man spoke once more, but now his voice was very faint and low, and all his accents were so altered that his nearest friend could not have recognized a tone; and his words came at intervals, quivering, and slow, and interrupted. "How exquisite," he said, "how exquisite this tranquil bliss. Never—no, never—felt I such complete peace before—such perfect happiness. Edgar—my time—is drawing—near. My feet grow numb and cold. Kiss me—boy—kiss me. The bird hath ceased his song."

Even while he spoke, its tones were filling every corner of the chamber with its most thrilling melody.

"The moon hath set."

Yet she was streaming full on his uncurtained couch.

"All—all is dark—and silent. Time—it is time—to die! My boy—my own boy. Bless you—Sibyl!—Sibyl!"

It was all over—the spirit had departed to its God.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

BOOK III.

There can be slain
No sacrifice to God more acceptable
Than an unjust and wicked king.

MILTON.—*From Seneca.*

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

A POET'S DREAM FOR ENGLAND.

THE abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power; and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affection swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But, when he once attains the topmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. JULIUS CÆSAR.

Two full years had gone round since the defeat of Naseby had paralyzed the efforts and destroyed the hopes of Charles Stuart's party. During all the remainder of that fatal year, even when winter had set in with its most keen severity, the arms of Cromwell swept like a hurricane over the western and the midland counties. No leader could compete with him on terms of vantage or equality; no forces stand against him in the field; no town or garrison resist his prowess. Chief after chief was beaten in detail; stronghold upon stronghold surrendered, or was stormed sword in hand; until, to end the whole, Winchester and the long-disputed post of Basing House were taken, and Astley, on the 21st of March, the sole commander of the king's now at the head of any power, suffered so total a defeat at Stow-on-the-Wold, being himself made prisoner, with sixteen hundred of his men, that he said frankly to his captors, "My masters,

you have done your work, and may go play, unless you please now to fall out among yourselves."

His fortunes in the field being thus utterly disastrous, after some fruitless efforts at negotiation with the parliament and with the Independent leaders, negotiation marked by all his usual chicane and insincerity, on the fifth day of May Charles threw himself into the quarters of the Earl of Leven, then besieging Newark. How the Scots dealt with their unhappy monarch -- who, whatsoever were his faults, undoubtedly confided in their honor —the world knows, for it has become a brand of national reproach. How—treated from the moment when they found he would not guarantee their Covenant, and promise to establish Presbyterian rule throughout the land, not as a prisoner merely, but with indignity and insult—how, Judas-like, they sold him to the parliament, and gave him up to Skippon, like a mere thing of merchandise, on payment of two hundred thousand pounds, is history.

But not so, or, at least, not generally known as such, that it was several times in the unfortunate king's power to escape to France or Holland, but that the menacing and angry letters of his false queen, who had her own peculiar reasons for dreading a reünion with her injured husband at this moment, prevented him till it was all too late, and, in effect, consigned him to the block. That the uxorious and weak king was mainly prompted to the war by the ill counsels of his adulterous wife, is evident. Her pride, her education, her hereditary prejudices, her self-will, nay, her very birth itself, made it but natural that she should aim at arbitrary power, and urge her husband, himself obstinate as weak, to that insane and suicidal policy which ultimately proved his ruin. But that, herself in safety, she should, with cool, determined infidelity, insist on his remaining among his deadly enemies, when hope was itself at an end, would seem incredible, were it not fixed beyond a doubt by the existence of her threatening letters, and his heart-broken answers.

Immediately on his surrender to the parliament he was removed to Holmby Castle, where he remained in close though honorable custody, served and attended as a king,

and suffered to indulge in all his favorite recreations, though strictly watched, and vigilantly hindered from any secret correspondence with his friends, and even interdicted from communion with ministers of the Episcopalian church.

At this very time there was in progress a desperate struggle between the Presbyterians and the army. The former, having already utterly suppressed Episcopacy through the realm, proceeded with the sternest and most bigoted intolerance of persecution against all sects, Papist or Protestant, except their own, clearly demonstrating their resolution to subject the whole kingdom to a system of church governance, connected with the state, under the Presbyterian form, as fully organized as that which they had just put down, and ten times more obnoxious to domestic freedom; ten times more rigid, fierce, inquisitorial, and tyrannical. Against these measures the Independents, who, although a minority in both houses, were formidable from the talents of the leaders, the enthusiasm of the mass, the real justice of their cause, and, above all, from the fact that they possessed the power of the sword, the army being almost unanimously in their favor, offered all constitutional opposition, but to no purpose. Petition after petition was presented, only to be contemned and disregarded.

Just at this moment it was rumored, and, as was shortly proved, truly, that the parliament was now preparing to disband the army without payment of its long arrears, and then to reenlist it, under Presbyterian officers for the conquest of rebellious Ireland; a plot most cunningly devised, could it have been effected, for wresting their ascendency from Ireton and Cromwell, and rendering themselves unquestioned masters of the state. This instantly gave rise to mutinies the most alarming; the army organized itself into political divisions—the privates, under their adjutators, elected two from every regiment, acting as a general assembly, and the officers forming a superior council — and treated with the parliament, as a species of fourth estate, holding itself under arms, and ready for offensive action.

At the first of this crisis Cromwell opposed the muti-

neers with such apparent energy and zeal, that, for a time, he lost his popularity with his own soldiery; and, shortly afterward, having been accused, or, at the least, suspected, in the house, of underhanded tampering with the mutineers, he cleared himself to the full satisfaction of all present by a most vehement and overpowering burst of indignation, mingled with tears, and prayers, and explanations, such as removed from every mind all doubts of his integrity. Shortly, however, fresh suspicions were excited among the Presbyterian leaders, who, dark and wily in their own secret machinations, naturally feared the like manœuvres from their political opponents. By some means it leaked out that a new Presbyterian army was to be raised forthwith; that the veteran host would be compelled to disband at the sword's point; and that Cromwell, Ireton, and Harrison, the champions of the Independents, would be committed to the Tower. Thus forced, in self-defense, to concur in those very movements which they had first opposed as mutiny — unless they should prefer to submit tamely to their own destruction, and to the overthrow of all those principles of civil and religious freedom for which they had so long and painfully contended — the military chieftains acted with all that rapid and decisive energy which had continually signalized their conduct in the field.

The instant they had ascertained the truth of these reports, one Joyce, a man of well-proved resolution, though by rank only cornet in Whalley's regiment of horse, was sent to Holmby to secure the person of the king, who was conducted with all the speed consistent with respect to the headquarters of the army. And such was the considerate and honorable bearing of the soldiery toward their captive monarch, that, on Fairfax's disavowing Joyce's enterprise and offering to send him back to Holmby, he at once replied that "nought but force should urge him to it."

And, in good truth, the difference of his situation was so great as well to justify his preference: and could he even then have laid aside dissimulation, and acted with straightforward singleness of purpose, it is most certain he might again have filled the throne of his fathers.

Both parties were, indeed, at this time willing, nay, desirous, to reinstate the sovereign; for such a union as that measure would have caused with the still powerful, though beaten faction, of the cavaliers, would have placed either of them permanently in the ascendant.

The Presbyterians proffered to replace him on the throne, provided he would yield assent to the substitution of a Presbytery for the established Church of England, endowed with all its ancient privileges, to the absolute suppression of all other sects; and farther, to such cessions of prerogative as would have left him but the shadow of a sceptre.

The Independents stipulated merely for universal toleration—excepting only Papistry, which they insisted he should extirpate entirely, root and branch—and for the full securing to all men of every constitutional and civil privilege. In either case his life and throne would have been secured to him. Yet could he not refrain from playing off the one against the other faction, till both had learned that they could place no confidence in his sincerity or truth.

While he continued with the army, all was, for a long time, comparatively sunshine; at Cromwell's intercession, his children, the young Dukes of York and Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth, were suffered constantly to visit him, and to remain in his society. Two chaplains of his own persuasion, an indulgence sternly refused him by the parliament, were granted willingly by the commanders of the soldiery, who, while they asserted their own liberty to worship as they chose—to preach and pray themselves, and listen to the exhortations, not of licensed gospellers, but of their own military saints—consistent at the least in this—were willing to concede to others, unlike the bitterer Presbyterians, the same rights which they stickled for themselves.

Fortified now by possessing, not the person only, but the confidence and favor of the king, the army moved toward London. From Newmarket they marched to Royston, Reading, and then Windsor; and at the latter place Charles occupied his royal castle. Thence, after some delay, advancing, they encamped on Hounslow,

their leaders holding constant although guarded intercourse with their now trembling and half-discomfited opponents. Early in August the king was reinstalled in Hampton Court, and all things seemed to be once more his own. His yeomen of the wardrobe and the guard attended him; he was permitted to hold levées of all parties; all his own favorite advisers were permitted to resort to him, including several under the ban of parliament. There was, as it were, a general amnesty and reconciliation. Members of both the houses visited him; Cromwell and Ireton held close and constant intercourse with him; and so sincere were these in their intention to befriend him, that they actually commenced a correspondence with the queen's emissaries, and suffered Berkeley, Legge, and Ashburnham once more to take their places in his council.

The adjutators of the regiments elected by the privates, and members from the council of the officers, attended him with terms so advantageous, that Sir John Berkeley openly declared, that "a crown so near lost was never yet so easily recovered as this would be, were things adjusted on these terms." Yet even then, hoping for something more, he haughtily and scornfully rejected their terms, and, plunging headlong into a fresh scheme with Lauderdale, assented to the covenant, on the condition that he should be brought at once to Westminster, which he had the folly to believe would place him where he was in power before the outbreak of hostilities.

The citizens of London and the militia of that city greedily entered on the scheme, and signed the covenant by thousands! Both houses instantly voted this an act of treason against England; but on that very night their doors were forced by a tumultuous and infuriate mob of Presbyterians, mingled with concealed royalists — their persons were assailed with violence and insult—their very lives endangered! Compelled by imminent and sudden peril, they passed a hasty vote sanctioning the return of Charles, but the next instant voted an adjournment, as unable to deliberate with liberty of conscience; and straightway a large party of both houses, with the speakers, Manchester and Lenthall, at their head, withdrew

from the disordered capital, and finally repaired to seek protection in the camp at Hounslow.

In the meantime, the violent presumption of the king, unduly elevated by his supposed success, and instigated farther by the intriguing Ashburnham, induced him actually to treat with contumely the adjutators of the army, openly refusing to concede the smallest jot of his prerogative, and even intimating his intention again to force Episcopacy on the Scots. Inflamed to madness by this strange tergiversation, the soldiers flew to arms; and a strong party forced their way into the chambers of Lord Lauderdale, then in the palace, and compelled him to return, having held no communication with the king, direct to London. A few days after this, with the most perfect shamelessness, the king in public solemnly disavowed his dealings with the Covenanters, and once more professed entire confidence in the commanders of the army, and feigned a vehement desire to come to settled terms with them.

In London the remnant of the houses commenced a weak and futile effort at resistance; they called out the militia of the city, appointing Waller and Massey to command their raw, tumultuary levies, repaired the fortifications, and, in short, had everything in readiness for action except energy and courage. After a rendezvous on Hounslow Heath, the parliamentary seceders were welcomed by the excited soldiery with the loudest acclamations and the sincerest tokens of affection. A convention held at Sion House, whereat Fairfax and his superior officers assumed their seats in common with the members of both houses, decided the whole question; and on the sixth of August the army entered London, without experiencing a shadow of resistance, their colors flying and their drums beating through the streets. That same day the seceders were reinstated in their seats by the strong hand of military power. The General Fairfax was appointed Constable of the Tower, and a thanksgiving voted with no dissentient voice either of peers or commons. Thus was the triumph of the Independents finally determined, and themselves raised to power, not soon again to fall.

It was the second day after the entrance of the army that Sir Edgar Arden, who, though he had become gradually more and more doubtful of the purity of Cromwell's motives, had played his part as gallantly as heretofore throughout the long campaigns of 1646 and 1647, and even shared in the deliberations and proceedings of the army as opposed to the yet darker machinations of the parliament, walked forth to seek for some solution of his apprehensions in the deep wisdom of his friend John Milton. His mind had, in truth, long been in a dubious and unsettled state; the tyranny of Charles, against which he had taken arms in the beginning, was something palpable and obvious, as was his leaning toward Romish doctrines, and his inclination to fritter down as much as possible the broad distinction between the Catholic and Episcopalian churches. It was, however, rather against the king's aggression upon civil freedom than against the abuses of the church that he had warred, although he saw the latter in so clear a light that he felt no repugnance to make common cause with those who viewed them as the greater evil.

Now, when the first oppressor was reduced, the first assailants of religious freedom beaten and trampled under foot, it seemed too probable that a new hydra-headed tyranny would spring up from the downfallen despotism, and greater outrages on liberty of conscience follow than those which had called England into arms. Such was indeed the certain course of things, if, in the present struggle, the parliament should regain the ascendency, which body, it was evident, under the strong plea of necessity, had already most alarmingly extended their boasted privileges, leaving all the assumptions of prerogative immeasurably in the rear, and which, now that the conflict was decided, showed little disposition to lay down their dear-bought power. Himself a follower of the Church of England, Sir Edgar had seen little to find fault with in the old establishment, except an over-rigor and a want of toleration, which he would have extended to all sects, except the Catholics, who were, in those days, truly formidable, from their determined spirit of propagandism,

their bigotry, and, above all, their undissembled inclination toward arbitrary government.

He therefore looked upon the stern and overstrained morality of the Presbytery with feelings of so deep dislike, that he would almost have surrendered all the gains of the late war to hinder its establishment as a predominating state-religion, although he would have gladly suffered it in common with all other Protestant denominations. With these views he had naturally joined the Independents in their contest with the parliament; but now that they had gained the day, he was yet ill at ease. A fierce fanatical government of arms would be, it was self-evident, the very worst of governments, and utterly subversive of the English liberties and constitution. The wavering and dishonest policy of Charles rendered his restoration all but impossible; while, in the deep-laid and unfathomable mysteries of Cromwell's course, Arden began to perceive daily more and more cause for apprehension and caution. Still, such were the rare talents of the man, such his inexplicable influence over the minds of all whom he encountered, that, while Sir Edgar doubted, he was compelled to grant that he had no cause for doubt which he could make clear to himself, much less to others. At times he fancied his religious ecstasies mere hypocritic jargon, adopted in order to mystify all eyes and veil his deep ambition; at others he believed him a wild, self-deceiving hypochondriac, an erring, though sincere enthusiast. Hitherto all that Oliver had done had doubtless been of service to the cause of veritable freedom; and it was certain that his present opposition to the Presbyterians *might* prove quite as unselfish, quite as beneficial to the commonwealth as his preceding opposition to the king.

Still it was too apparent to escape the foresight of a politician so clear-headed and far-reaching as Sir Edgar, that, if the military faction should gain firm foothold in the state, Cromwell would not lack either talent, opportunity, or power to mount even to the topmost summit of ambition, if he should feel the inclination to attempt it. And who, when all things most magnificently tempting lie prone, subject to his mere will, yea, courting

him to grasp them, when to dare almost seems a virtue, to refrain a weakness, who can, in such a situation, answer for another—who even for himself?

Revolving such thoughts in his mind, and eager to unbosom himself to some true friend, Sir Edgar took his way, as has been said, on the second evening after the occupation of the city by the troops, toward the dwelling of John Milton. The controversialist had changed his domicile during this troubled period, and now occupied a smaller house in Holborn, opening backward upon Lincoln's Inn.

It was a lovely evening as ever smiled upon the earth which Arden had selected for his visit to the patriotic poet. The setting sun, that alchemist of nature, shone out so brilliantly from an unclouded sky, that even the great wilderness of walls and chimneys, for once seen through a purer medium than their accustomed canopy of fog and smoke, looked cheerfully. The same grave-eyed and sober-looking servitor who had admitted him at his last visit six long years before, opened the door; and, in reply to his inquiry, informed him that Master Milton was within, but in his garden; and, ushering him into a small parlor, decked with the self-same dark green hangings, offered to call his master. But, declining his civility, Sir Edgar walked himself into the narrow stripe of garden, planted with a few lilachs and laburnams, all besmirched and dingy from the effects of the London atmosphere. At first he saw not anything of him he sought; but, in a moment after, he distinguished the full, solemn voice, whose cadences, once heard, could never be forgotten, proceeding from a little arbor facing the western sun, and covered by a mass of annual creepers such as may easily be reared even upon the meanest plat of soil. The sounds, however, were not as of one engaged in conversation, but resembled rather the accents of a person thinking aloud, or possibly composing what might be afterward committed to the safer guardianship of paper. The words which reached his ear as he advanced were these, at no long period subsequently published in the poem styled Il Penseroso:

"The high-embowed roof
With antique columns massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

That which was most peculiar in the manner of the speaker, if, as Arden suspected, he were pronouncing thoughts which for the first time now were couched in language, was, that they flowed in one melodious and uninterrupted stream, unbroken by the slightest pause or hesitation, and running, as it were, into spontaneous melody; as unpremeditated as the music of a bird, the murmuring of a rivulet, or any other natural sound that soothes the ear of man with untaught harmony.

He had not, however, much time to drink in the sweet and solemn verses, for the quick ear of the poet—quicker, perhaps, as his sense of vision year after year became less vigorous—detected an approaching footstep on the gravel walk; and, ceasing instantly from his employment, he stepped forth to meet his visitor. The countenance of Milton was but little altered, embalmed as it were by his passionless and peaceful avocations, excepting that perhaps the furrows on his expansive forehead, furrows of thought, not age, were somewhat deeper, and the whole expression of his lineaments more subdued and even melancholy than when they last met his friend's eye. The change, if change there were, was slight indeed as compared with the havoc which anxiety, grief, hardship, and exposure, more than time, had wrought on the fine features of Sir Edgar Arden.

His glance was, indeed, bright as ever; his carriage as erect and dignified; his limbs as muscular, nay, even as elastic. But the high manly beauty, the triumphant energy, the soul out-flashing from the face at every new emotion, the flush of youth, the glorious radiancy of a fresh mind, were utterly extinct forever. The features were, indeed, the same in their proud classic mould, save that the nose was sharpened, and that the mouth so firmly set, rarely

or never now relaxed into that playful smile which used to light up the whole countenance like sudden sunshine. Deep lines were visible, not on the forehead only, but hard and sharply cut from either nostril downward. His hair, still soft and waving, was streaked in many places with premature and wintry gray; and, more than all, a dull dead shadow had settled down upon him with a gloom like that which an autumnal cloud will cast upon a landscape that, scarce a minute past, was laughing in its sunniest loveliness. At first sight Milton scarcely recognized his friend and pupil; and, when at length he did so, he framed a half apology, attributing the blame to his own "great infirmity, becoming," as he said, "as each morn rose on its preceding night, but more and more decided."

"I thank you," answered Arden, grasping the soft hand of the scholar with warm affection, "I thank you for your kindly artifice; but I well know that hard seasons, and yet harder fortunes, have so far changed me, that, were my mother living, she scarce could recognize her son in the gray, weather-beaten soldier that alone remains of him. But, after all, what matters it? what matters it that our frail bodies should wear out and wither, when even thus they outlive empires. But let us in—if I may so far trespass on your leisure — my mind is ill at ease, and I would fain cast off some of its secret burdens into ears which I know friendly, wise, and trustworthy."

Milton assented with a kindly but grave gesture; sympathizing more deeply than could have been expected, from his unworldly habits and philosophic style of thought, in the appalling change which he was aware could have been only wrought by singular affliction on the aspect of a man whom he knew, by experience, to be calmer and more disciplined of mind than the most chastened of his austere contemporaries. They walked in silence to the house, for the hearts of both were too full to vent themselves in any converse of small moment; but, when once seated in the quiet parlor, Arden at once broke silence.

"I have," he said, "methinks, more than a common

claim on you for that advice and information which I believe no one can so well afford me; seeing that it was owing mainly to your exhortations that I determined on embarking actively upon that stream of circumstances which has all blindly swept me onward to this pass. Obedient, or, I should rather say, convinced by those your exhortations, I have been, as you know, a faithful and unflinching, if unimportant, actor in the events which have dethroned the king, abolished the established church, and, to conclude, laid the whole realm, laws, liberties, and lives of Englishmen, at the precarious mercy of an armed and zealot multitude. In thus pursuing the dictates of *your* advice not less than of *my* conscience, I devoted myself wholly to what I *then* believed my country's good. I have lost, sacrificed everything. I am alone among the ruins of my house, a sole and thunder-stricken column left standing when its temple hath forever fallen. My father died at Naseby; my only consolation this, that he forgot our differences, and blessed me ere he passed away. My betrothed bride — you saw her once in our young days of hope and promise, and know her priceless worth — is perishing by inches of a pined and broken heart. But this—ay! all this I could bear, were it not that dark fears have grown into my soul till I doubt everything — almost my own integrity and honor. A busy voice is whispering at my heart that I have forfeited all that makes life a blessing — nay, more, that I have aided in destroying all those most dear to me, and in the chase of a vain phantom. And more, yet more than this; that in the very chase I have but been the sport and mockery of a falsehood. I feel, I see that England has been deluged with the blood of her free sons; that her valleys have been fattened with the corpses of her best and bravest; that her wise and pious prelates have been driven from out their spheres of usefulness; that her monarch, justly, I grant, but fatally, is held captive in the very palaces of his forefathers; that her constitution is plunged into the wildest jeopardy. All this I feel — I see. The havoc and the misery, the desolation and the peril! But when I look forward, all is blank and hopeless. The worst view, anarchy in the state, and per

secution in the church! For government, an army of sectarians and schismatics, fanatical, and ignorant, and savage! For council, a small knot of officers; wild, visionary madmen, like Harrison and Lilburne; enthusiasts, like Ireton; or hypocrites and mercenary knaves, like hundreds I *could* name, but need not! and for church, an austere, intolerant, morose, heart-chilling discipline, paralyzing every noble aspiration, condemning every innocent and lawful pleasure, hardening, and, at the same time, lowering every heart, confounding every real standard, narrowing all distinctions between vice and virtue, converting men into mere hypocrites, or, worse, into mere misanthropes and brutes! This is the darker side of the picture; turn it! and the best view — truly, the more I look upon it, the more sure do I feel that it will come to pass—the best view is the resurrection of a stronger dynasty, stronger because supported by a standing army, founded upon a conquest, erected on the ruins of all that *did* oppose its predecessor, and *cannot* oppose *it* — a dynasty, with for its founder and its head, mightier and more dangerous a thousand fold than Charles, because more wise, more valiant, and more virtuous — start not, my friend, at what I am about to say — with for its first sovereign—CROMWELL."

"I have heard you without interruption," answered Milton, in his rich, persuasive tones, "but with sorrow, with attention, and with wonder. Sorrow—that you have lain beneath the burden of affliction, such as no fainting pilgrim of us all could bear and live, did we not know that such is but the test which the Supreme Artificer applies to try the temper and the metal of our souls; the purgative, like fire under the rude ores of the mine, by which he fits our corrupt bodies to put on incorruption. Attention—for that, although I trust to show them baseless as the morning vapors which disappear before the all-pervading daylight, your prognostics are fraught deeply with the world's wisdom, and your views of the presbytery entirely sound and solid. Wonder—that you should doubt, or anywise distrust, the purest and sincerest patriot, the most upright judge, the stoutest man-of-war, the trustiest and most pains-taking christian that the Lord

hath raised up, since the old days of Israel's glory, to vindicate the liberties and wipe away the sorrows of an oppressed and groaning people."

"I rejoice much," Edgar replied, "to hear that such is your opinion. I cannot say, indeed, that I so much distrust *him* as I do the tide of circumstances which seem to flow on irresistibly toward his elevation. Charles never can again sit on the throne; no party can place confidence in him; myself I would not see him there, for whensoever he should fancy he had gained the power, so surely as we two are here conversing now, would he renew these struggles. He is in heart, by habit, by his very blood, a despot. But let me profit by your wisdom—to what end do you look, whether for sorrow or rejoicing?"

"The lieutenant-general," answered Milton, "has gone hence but now; scarcely an hour before you came. Indeed, he passed a great part of the morning with me in grave disputation; for we did not, nor do we yet, agree. He would replace Charles Stuart in the high places of his fathers, dreading the tyranny of the parliament more than he dreads the despotism of the king—the persecutions of the Presbyterians beyond the persecutions of the Pre latists."

"Indeed!" Sir Edgar answered, in great astonishment; "indeed! Then have I much misjudged him. Restore Charles Stuart! I should have thought he would have stricken off his right hand sooner!"

"He would do so, however," Milton replied; "beyond all doubt he would. He deems he has devised a scheme to fetter him within the bounds of lawful power. Besides, he trusts his gratitude--mistaken trust, I fear me, on most unstable grounds. He parted hence almost in anger, for that I thwarted him and held his project naught."

"And the terms?" asked Sir Edgar; "what be the terms on which he would restore him?"

"Certain improvements in the freedom of elections," returned the other, "and in the rights of parliament. The military power both by land and sea, and the creation of all great officers of state, to be for ten years vested solely in that body. No person who has warred against the

parliament to sit for five years, whether as peer or commoner, or to hold any office. No peers created since the removal of the privy seal in 1642 to sit without permission of both houses. All grants made by the king since that same date to be held void; all by the lords and commons valid. The liturgy not to be enjoined, nor yet the covenant enforced, but all coercive power to be taken from the bishops and the clergy. The king, queen, and the royal issue, except in these points, to resume all their old powers and prerogatives without restriction; and, lastly, an indemnity, to all but five delinquents, to be granted in behalf of those who have served for the king, whether in camp or council."

"And does the king consent?" Arden inquired once more.

"Surely he does," the poet answered; "he were mad to refuse conditions which, fallen as he is, he could have scarce even hoped for."

"It would work well," said Edgar, musing very deeply. "It would work excellently well if the king might be trusted. But — I fear still. At all events, the zeal of Cromwell to promote this settlement argues that I have been unjust in my suspicions. Yes, I have greatly wronged him. But you said that you differed from his views, and that he went hence ireful and chafing. I pray you tell me—what, then, are your opinions?"

"Mine?" replied Milton; "my opinions are but the musings of a solitary bookman, unskilled in court or council—neither a statesman nor a politician; yet, such as they be, you shall have them. I would see England free! free and unshackled, as was Rome in her fresh days of glory, ere she had bowed the knee to any Kaisar; as Greece, when she spurned forth the countless myriads of the oriental king from her unviolated shores, and reared herself a bright example, pure and immortal, of liberty unquenched, unquenchable! I would see England subject to law, to reason, and to God—bending the neck to none —'rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks!' I would 'see her as an eagle, muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam!' yea, spreading forth to the

four winds of heaven her long-abused and fettered pinions, superbly floating in her pride of place, unscathed amid the lightnings of the empyrean! And wherefore, I would ask you, not? Consider what we are and have been—'a nation, not slow nor dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtile and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to!' A nation not luxurious nor effeminate, but of a hardihood surpassing that, I say not of the frivolous, light Frenchman, not of the polished and effete Italian, not of the indolent Castilian, but of the frugal Transylvanian, the winter-tempered Russ, the mountain Switzer! A nation boasting itself the freeborn offspring of the free! a nation that rolled back the flood of Roman war from its interior fastnesses, when Rome was at the mightest! a nation that shall yet —once freed from the soul-galling yoke of monarchy—the spirit-killing sway of Prelatists, and peers, and Papists —send forth its arms, its laws, its language, and, above all, the lights of its religion, to the remotest corners of the habitable earth, securely throned on her sea-circled pinnacle of glory, o'ershadowing the lands with its dominion, sweeping the ocean-waves with its renown!"

"Dreams—dreams!" replied Arden, shaking his head mournfully; "beautiful—beautiful dreams, but baseless! Methought that you had studied history more narrowly. There never has been, from the world's birth till now—there never shall be, henceforth to the day when the great trump shall sound—a true republic! Rome, when her kings were banished, was an aristocracy—a wise, poor, frugal, brave, paternal *aristocracy;* foot after foot her nobles yielded to the flood of what her demagogues styled freedom; the moment when she became republican or democratic, which you will, that moment held her up a prize to the successful soldier. Her history was thenceforth—corruption, anarchy, bloodshed, proscription, Cæsar! And what was Athens? If for a little while she stood cemented by external wars, which forced her to be single and united, what was her government but a succession of bright usurpations—of aggressions on the people's rights—abuses of the people's power, till, at the last, de-

mocracy prevailed; and then—the thirty tyrants! Sparta, from first to last, was the most close and austere oligarchy the earth has ever witnessed—ay, oligarchy within oligarchy—an irresponsible and highborn senate, holding its sway for life over an oligarchy of six thousand warrior Dorians; who in turn domineered with a most iron sceptre over their myriads of subordinate Laconians, myriads of scourged and tortured Helots! These! these are your bright examples—these the republics of the universe! For you will hardly quote me Venice—Genoa—Florence—wherein not all a Petrarch's or an Ariosto's glory could veil the degradation of the slavish mob—the tyrant insolence of the brute nobles. Dreams, I say once again—beautiful, but still dreams! Alas, for human nature! how can we look to see republics stand, unless we hope for wisdom and for virtue in the councils and the actions of the mass—how hope for these when human reason and Divine authority tell us alike, and tell us truly, that the majority of men are ignorant and prone to evil! But now, truce to discussion; you have relieved my mind, at all events, from one great dread—of having been, in truth, while I supposed myself, in some degree, a champion of my country's weal, the mere tool of one man's ambition. This was the point on which I chiefly sought your counsel, and I am satisfied. And now let us to lighter and more pleasing matters. I heard your voice, as I approached the arbor, composing, as I fancied, some new poem."

"A trifle—a mere trifle," answered the other, as if half reluctant to descant on such a subject; but Arden's end was gained; the thread of their original discourse was broken, and, turning thence to poetry and the chief literary topics of the day, a conversation followed, which, though of interest enough to those who held it, was scarce of such importance as to warrant its transmission to posterity.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING AND HIS SUCCESSOR.

Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure
Ay, such a pleasure as encaged birds
Conceive, when, after many moody thoughts,
At last, by notes of household harmony,
They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,
And chiefly, therefore, I thank God and thee.

KING HENRY VI.—*Part 3.*

It was a lovely summer morning, with a soft west wind just ruffling the bosom of the silver Thames, and wantoning among the graceful foliage of the tall trees, and slenderer though not less beautiful exotics, which still adorn in such profusion the gardens of that palace built by the haughty Wolsey, but destined briefly to pass into the hands of his bluff master, and to descend to his posterity as one of the fairest abodes of England's royalty. In a magnificent apartment overlooking those unrivalled gardens, its ceiling gorgeously painted in Italian frescoes with some of the most picturesque creations of the Grecian fable, its walls draped with brocaded damask bordered with arabesques of gold two feet in width, and decorated with the master-pieces of Vandyck and Lely, in all but power a king, sat Charles, gazing out with a sad but quiet eye upon the flowery parterres, adorned with many an urn and statue, the trimly-shaven lawns, the odorous thickets, and the alleys green, with the broad monarch of his kingdom's rivers flashing out brightly in the sunshine between the fluttering leaves.

His children were about him. The Duke of York, the eldest of those present, afterward, the hapless James the Second, was leaning on his father's knee, and looking up into his face as if conscious of the melancholy air, which had become almost habitual to those unmarked but comely features, yet ignorant of the dark causes which had there imprinted it. The younger Duke of Gloucester, and Elizabeth, his little sister, just at that happy age

when tears are but as April showers, succeeded instantly by smiles, when sorrows pass away and leave no sting behind, were busily employed imprisoning, beneath a Venice goblet, a painted butterfly, which, lured by a display of lovely summer flowers blooming in a large crystal vase upon the table, had flitted in through the tall casements but to be made a prize by the admiring children. A louder laugh than usual, joyously bursting from the lips of the young girl, diverted the king's mind for a moment from his sad reflections.

"My little girl," he said, half sorrowfully smiling, "you would not persecute the pretty butterfly; see how it beats its painted wings against the walls of its transparent prison, and rubs off all the downy colors that you thought so beautiful. Know, my Elizabeth, that poor, imprisoned fly would now be fluttering far away over the sunny gardens, in the sweet morning air, sipping the dew from every flower, happy and free; and you, by shutting it up here, have made it very wretched; and it will pine and die. See, it grows weak already; would not my darling sorrow for the poor butterfly, if she should find it lying dead upon its prison floor to-morrow?"

The child stared wonderingly, with her great blue eyes wide open, upon her father; for he spoke with a degree of serious and simple pathos, caused, perhaps, by a sense of sympathy with the slight insect, caged like himself, though in a splendid prison; but, as he ceased, a big tear swelled upon the lashes of either bright orb, and slid slowly down over her rosy cheeks. "I did not want," she said, "to make the butterfly unhappy. Will it die, papa, now, if I let it fly away?"

"No, my sweet child," he answered, "it will revive directly; all that it wants is the fresh air, and liberty to go where it pleases."

"Then farewell, pretty butterfly, she cried, half weeping and half smiling, as she released the captive. "I should not love to be a prisoner myself. Go and be very happy. See! see! he is gone already!"

"Heaven, in its mercy, grant you never may, my child," Charles answered solemnly; "but, if it should please God that evil men should shut you up, you must be very pa-

tient, and not hate those who hurt you, but forgive them, and say your prayers for them to your great King and Father in his holy heaven, that he may pardon them, and turn their hearts."

"Do you do so, papa," she said—"do you do so? For I heard you say one day that you were a prisoner—though this pretty room can hardly be a prison—for I thought a prison was a dark place under ground, all barred with iron grates, and very terrible. Do you forgive your enemies?"

"Surely I do, my little girl," he answered, "else would not God forgive me. But, now, go play—for, see here, some one comes to speak with me;" and, as he said the words, the door was opened, and a gentleman usher with his black rod entered the chamber, and informed the king that the Lieutenant-general Cromwell was in the audience-chamber waiting his pleasure.

"Admit him forthwith, Fielding; we will receive him here," replied the king; "and, hark you, pray Mistress Drummond to come hither, and take hence the children. We would be alone."

The usher instantly retired; and taking up his high-crowned hat which lay upon the table, without any feather, but ornamented by a diamond buckle in the band, he placed it on his head, and seated himself before a writing cabinet of ebony inlaid with ivory and silver. Scarce had he settled himself, with perhaps some slight view to effect, when the Independent entered. He was uncovered, bearing his beaver in his hand, and bowed low to the fallen sovereign, though he bent not the knee, nor offered any movement to kiss hands. It was a singular and interesting meeting between two men, pitted by fortune for long years against each other, and now thrown peaceably into familiar contact. The contrast, the inborn difference between the two, was strangely marked and striking. Both were great—but the one born to greatness, the other having, by the energies of his own mind, the actions of his own right hand, achieved it. Their features spoke volumes as to the distinction.

The king's were, indeed, comely, and full of a calm natural majesty, but bearing no decisive marks of any ru-

ling principle or passion; no radiancy of intellect; no manifest impress of character. Mild, though at the same time somewhat stern, their chief expression was an air of cold and melancholy resolution, not, perhaps, inconsistent with the traits of mind for which he was remarkable. When gazed upon, indeed, by one who knew him as the king, he looked it every inch; but, had he been met in a crowd, attired as a private individual, he would have been observed for nothing but the easy bearing natural to every high-born gentleman.

The countenance of Cromwell, on the contrary, owed all its influence over the mind of those who saw him, and powerful, indeed, and universal was that influence, to the undoubted stamp of genius; to the indomitable resolution, the deeply-seated and unfathomable thought; the quiet but intense enthusiasm, graven in living characters upon his homely features—to the intelligence, in short, and soul that flashed out palpably from every line and lineament of his marked face. Seen in the armor of the soldier, the statesman's robe of peace, the plain garb of the every-day staid citizen, or the vile tatters of the mendicant, he could not for a second's space have remained unnoted as a superior creature; as a man of vast unquestionable powers. But if, in this respect, the carver out of his own mighty fortunes surpassed the owner of legitimate hereditary sway, in bearing and demeanor there was no comparison. Every position, every movement of the king was redolent of ease and dignity combined; and his repose, that hardest test of grace, carelessly natural and unstudied, was as perfect in its harmony and keeping as if it had been the result of the most artful skill. The motions of the Independent, on the other hand, were sudden, rapid, rough; his postures rigid and iron, when erect; when seated, angular at any time and awkward, but so more obviously when brought into relief by contrast to the elegance of Charles.

Both were dressed simply for their station in society, the king especially, who would have been outshone at first sight by the poorest noble of his court. He wore a plain suit of black taffeta, crossed by the broad riband of the garter, silk stockings of the same color, with satin

roses in his shoes, and a short mantle of black velvet. His sword was a plain mourning rapier, with a hilt of jet; but the deep falling collar round his neck was of the finest Brussel's point, and the star on the left side of his cloak glittered with diamonds of the purest water. His visitor, who, as he rose in dignity and station, had discarded the slovenly and coarse style of his garments, was attired handsomely in a half uniform of marone-colored cloth, faced with black velvet; a broad silk scarf of the same hue was wound in many folds about his waist, supporting his steel-hilted rapier. Military boots, highly polished and equipped with silver spurs, met his trunk hose, fashioned to match his doublet, just below the knee; and a silk hat-band, with a silver clasp, relieved his dark gray beaver.

"I give you good day, sir," said Charles, in answer to the low reverence of Cromwell; "we are well pleased to see you, the rather that we owe you thanks, for that, as we have learned, by your warm intercession with the parliament, our children have been yielded to our prayers."

"Verily," answered Cromwell, "verily, if it please your highness, I hold this matter no just cause for thanks; seeing that, as myself a father, whom the Lord hath vouchsafed to bless with a fair progeny, and as a christian man, who, having learned that we should do to others as we would have it done to us, strives still to put in practice that which he has learned, I have but done my duty. Permit me to hope, rather, that it may be my fortune, in the time to come, in such degree to minister unto your majesty's advancement and well-being, as may deserve not *your* thanks only, but those of this distracted realm."

"Nevertheless, we thank you sir," returned Charles, with a smile seemingly sincere and natural, "both for the good which you have done to us already, and that which you profess your will to do hereafter. We will speak more at length when we shall be alone; and, in good time, here comes fair Mistress Drummond. Good Drummond"—he addressed the lady who now entered—"we will, if you be now at leisure, trespass so far upon your time as pray you to bestow your care upon these little ones. James," he said, turning to the Duke of York, "if Sir John Berke-

ley be at liberty to wait on you, you have my license to ride forth; but see you be not absent over-long. Farewell, my little prattlers," and he stooped down to kiss the rosy lips of the young princess, laying his hand softly on the sunny curls of Gloucester. "Drummond will take you to the gardens; and, in an hour or two, you may return to me. Farewell!—Who waits without?" he added, in a louder voice, as the lady left the chamber with the children.

"Feilding, your majesty," replied the usher, a cadet of the noble house of Denbigh.

"Feilding, we would be private. What pages have you there?"

"Mildmay and Henry Gage, so please you."

"Send Mildmay to the head of the great stairs; let Gage wait at the entrance of the painted gallery, and you bestow yourself in the fourth window hence. Suffer not any one to pass the stairs, nor interrupt us upon any plea of pleasure or of business! Business," he added, now addressing Cromwell, who had remained standing, hat in hand — "we will to business, sir, for that, I trow, has gained for me the pleasure of this visit. I pray you sit—nearer the table, if it please you;" and, drawing forth some papers from the cabinet before him, he perused them rapidly, as if in search of some peculiar passage.

"Has your grace found the leisure," Cromwell asked, "to overrun the schedule of conditions which my son-in-law, Colonel Ireton, had the honor to submit to your attention?"

"I have, and carefully," answered the king; "and, on the whole, since, as it seems, I may not now do better, I am contented to abide by them. One thing, and one alone, if possible, I would have stricken out or modified. 'Tis the last article, I mean; this one relating to the five delinquents. I cannot, no, I cannot, on any terms, surrender friends, whose only crime has been their love to me; their firm adherence to my fortunes; their sacrifice of all that men hold dearest, to prop the falling fragment of their master's greatness. No, I cannot surrender them to death—to such a death as this. I were no man to do so!"

"I should regret," said Cromwell, gravely, "most sincerely that your majesty's objection to this article were absolute; for I will not pretend one moment to conceal from you my full conviction, that on this point the parliament and army are both alike determined; and that refusal to surrender these men, not to death, but to impartial trial, will break off at once, and forever, all negotiation. The army are exasperated to the last degree against some of your majesty's advisers; and, I profess to you, the times crave very wary walking! From parliament, as I believe your highness has discovered heretofore, nothing can be hoped. They will not treat at all, save on the utter abolition of the Church of England — that form to which your grace is, as I well believe — and wherefore should you not? since to all men there cannot be one faith or one opinion, more than one tone of voice or set of features—religiously and conscientiously attached — and the establishment, throughout the land, of their presbytery."

"Never! I never will consent to it," exclaimed the king; "I will die sooner."

"Save on these terms, however, they will never treat," Cromwell replied. "I have — I do profess it to your grace — I have labored with my whole soul and spirit, wrestling in your behalf and for your friends' advantage; and, truly, I scruple not to say it, I hold there is not one among the Presbyterian faction that will consent to a firm peace, while there be any bishops in the land."

"I do believe," said Charles, "I do, indeed, believe that you have stood my friend of late; and I thank you for it, and, well I hope, the time shall come when I can compensate your good deeds to the full."

"Your majesty may say so, well," Cromwell replied, impressively; "I have stood forth somewhat too boldly, so that I have—I grieve to say it, but, verily, truth must be spoken always—so that I have fallen into some suspicion even among my veteran soldiery; so that they scoff, and point at me with jeering fingers, and cry, 'Lo! he, that puts his trust in princes!' Also the adjutators of the regiments have called into their counsel my son Ireton, and wrathfully entreated him, enjoining it most sternly

on him that we shall hold no more communion with your highness unless some terms be settled, and that, too, right speedily."

"Indeed," answered the king, "I had hoped that the army was disposed more loyally."

"Of a truth," Cromwell replied, "it was so; greatly distrusting the rogue Presbyterians, and striving often and sincerely with the Lord in spirit, that it would please him to replace your majesty in the dominion and upon the throne of your forefathers; but, when you last gave audience to the adjutators—surely it is a grievous thing to say—but I profess to you, as the Lord liveth, it is true, all their trust in your highness passed away; and all the favor you had met with in their eyes departed, even as morning clouds when the south wind chaseth them. Yea! and their hearts were hardened, and their countenances changed against you, and against all they deemed your friends. Moreover, secretly have I—ay, even I myself—been now advised, by letters from tried friends and otherwise, that threats are rife against me in the camp; how they would lay wait privily, and dig a pit, and set a snare before me, and take and smite me with the sword, and slay me under the cloud of night. But, as I live, they know me not, who do suppose that any fear of that which man can do to me shall turn me from performing that which I have tasked my spirit to accomplish. Truly these terms, which now lie here before your majesty, with much of danger and yet more of difficulty have I prevailed upon the host to offer you. If that it seem good to you to accept them, I pledge myself right gladly that the parliament shall, ere long, consent likewise. For, lo! the army is the mightier! But if—which I trust will not be the case—you shall determine to reject them, then do I wash my hands of it. If by mine own self-sacrifice I could secure your majesty's and England's quiet, then might I, possibly, devote myself; but, truly, I esteem it mere insanity to rush upon mine own destruction when naught is to be gained proportionate."

"If it be so," answered Charles, after a brief pause of deliberation, "and these be the best terms your friendly aid may gain for me, I will be frank with you, and can-

didly accept them. Rather would I take harder terms from the blunt honesty of your stout soldiers, than chaffer for conditions, as for vile merchandize, with the cold cozening Presbyterians; and, for your own part, trust me when I say, that, next to the Almighty, with reverence be it spoken, I hold *you* the instrument that hath uplifted me from the abyss of sorrow, and wrought for me deliverance and restoration! And I assure you there shall be a time when you will own me grateful."

"This, then is settled," Cromwell replied; "I may announce unto the host your majesty's unqualified assent to these their propositions."

"You are at liberty to do so," returned Charles, "for myself, from this hour, I hold myself bound by them."

"Right joyful am I," exclaimed Oliver; "all thanks be to the Lord of Hosts! England shall then have peace! Verily, ere ten days be passed, your majesty shall sit in state at Westminster."

"And my first deed, when there," said Charles, "in guerdon of your much esteemed and faithful services, shall be to raise my well-beloved and trusty Cromwell to the peerage, under the title, now extinct, of Earl of Essex, and to grace him with the garter of St. George, which never yet was buckled round the knee of braver leader. The parliament, I trow, will not object to honors thus bestowed on their best general, nor to my commending him to the command of England's armies!"

"Your majesty is gracious," answered the Independent, in a tone half indignation and half irony; "but, not to be made Prince of Wales, and heir to England's crown, would I thus labor that you should once more occupy the throne, did I not well believe that England's peace demands it! It is for England's laws and England's liberties, not for my personal aggrandizement, not that I should be known as lord, or earl, nor yet by any other title, which is but earthly pomp and vanity before the Lord—not that I should be the owner of broad lands or the dispenser of preferments, wielding the truncheon of the hosts of Britain — that I have done so much and suffered; and, did I not believe your majesty resolved hence-

forth to hold the liberties and weal of all your subjects nearest your heart, and the fear of the Lord alway before your eyes, verily, I would wish that my arm should be withered and my tongue palsied, before I would strike one blow or syllable one word to save you from perdition! But, now this matter is so happily arranged, may it please your grace excuse me. My duties call me hence to Windsor, where I should be by noon!"

"Duty, sir, needs no license," Charles replied, smiling graciously, and rising from his seat, and even taking three steps toward the door, as the blunt soldier moved to leave the presence; "and, till we meet at Westminster, rest in the full assurance of possessing your liege sovereign's gratitude and favor. Ha!" he continued, as the door closed, and he found himself alone, "deep as he is, I have outgeneralled him. Now he suspects not anything. Ha! ha! the garter! and the earldom of Essex —a precious clown, in faith, to grace an earldom! But now for Lauderdale and Hollis!—the dull fools—we will outwit them all, and yet reign, as our father did before us, a king in something more than name."

But the enthusiast strode forth, the tesselated floor of the proud gallery ringing beneath his massive stride, exulting and triumphant; and, as he passed the vestibule, where there were none to mark his actions, he clasped both hands above his head, and cried out in a voice husky and stifled with emotion, "My country — oh my country —have I then, have I won for thee peace, happiness, and freedom?"

CHAPTER III.

THE FATAL LETTER.

Let us see—
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers is more lawful.

KING LEAR.

It was the third day only after Cromwell's interview with Charles, that Arden, who had purchased a small house in the Strand, with pleasant gardens sloping to the river, making it his continual abode when not engaged in military duties, was walking on the terrace close to the water's edge, in one of those abstracted and half-melancholy moods which had become almost habitual to him, except when circumstances calling for sudden action roused him at once to all his former energy.

The day had been one of storm, more like a winter's tempest than a mere summer's shower; the rain, driven along the river's course by a cold eastern gale, had fallen constantly since daybreak; and, though toward evening it had ceased, and the wind sunk, a thick, chilling mist crept up the stream, at the first clinging only to the opposite shores and curtaining the distant objects, but increasing gradually in its volume, till the whole space from bank to bank was filled with a gray mass of fog, so palpable and dense that barge and wherry passed and repassed unseen, although the near dash of their oars and the loud voices of the rowers showed that they could scarcely be at ten yards distance.

A transient gleam of sunshine had drawn forth Sir Edgar from his solitary studies; and, once plunged in his gloomy reveries, he continued to walk to and fro, scarce conscious of the increasing badness of the weather; but suddenly as he paused near the little wharf to which his barge was moored, a stern voice, whose accents of command he recognized at once, rose from the misty river above the splashing of the oars which had for some time been approaching.

"Ho! put in here, thou stupid knave; here, at this private stair; 'tis here we would be landed."

He could not be mistaken, it was the voice of Cromwell; and immediately the sharp beak of a wherry ran upon the steps, pulled by two watermen, with two more men, soldiers it seemed, reclining in the stern. Oliver, for one was indeed he, leaped out forthwith, and addressed Edgar hastily, as if afraid that he should speak the first, and in a tone so loud that it was evident he wished the boatmen to hear what he said.

"Is not this, I beseech you, the dwelling of brave Colonel Arden? We have come hither from the army—two of the adjutators—to bear tidings to him."

"It is, sir," Edgar replied, quickly comprehending Cromwell's wish. "And I am Colonel Arden. I pray you walk up to the house, you and your comrade."

"Surely, most surely," Oliver replied, with well-feigned bluntness; "we have come by the river up from Brentford, and I profess that I am chilled, and yearning for the creature comforts. How say you, Fast-and-Pray, think you a quartern of strong waters would go down amiss? You, watermen," he added, "make fast your boat there to the stairs, and follow us to the house; we cannot tarry here in this foul mist to pay your fares." They were joined, while he was speaking, by the other soldier, whom, despite his dress, Arden at first sight discovered to be Ireton; and, although not a little wondering at their visit, and the disguise they had adopted, judging the garden no place for inquiry, he led them in all haste toward the house. Both wore coarse scarlet cassocks, with buff breeches and immense jack-boots, the uniform of privates in the ironsides off duty; long tucks, with iron scabbards, hanging from their buff belts, and clattering on the pavements as they strode along; and broad-brimmed hats of felt, the flaps unlooped, and covering their brows as if to guard against the weather. They both were furnished with tobacco-pipes — short, dingy, clay tubes — and smoked almost incessantly, as well to cloud their features as to afford a plausible excuse for silence; but, as a farther safeguard against inquiring eyes, Cromwell had cast about him a stained and weather-beaten

dragoon cloak of frieze, with its cape muffling him well-nigh to the mouth. Ireton carried in his hand a package of some size, wrapped in an oil-skin cover; and, on a casual meeting, even an intimate acquaintance would have detected nothing in their air or demeanor by which to judge them different from what they seemed.

The moment they had entered — "Let your domestics instantly take arms," said Cromwell, "and lay these watermen by the heels; they might blab else, although I think they know us not; and let your trusty steward alone attend us; and bid him see that your doors be locked, and that no one of your attendants, on any pretext, this night cross the threshold." Leading his guests himself into a small library retired from the street and looking out upon the garden, Edgar went out to give his orders. Before returning he had seen the boatmen, after a slight struggle, secured in a remote chamber, with an abundance of strong liquors, which he judged rightly would at once console them and effectually close their mouths, and having posted two stout watchmen at the door, had given his directions to old Anthony, who, since Sir Henry's death, followed his fortunes, and held the keys of every door and shutter in his own possession.

"Rude greeting, this," said Oliver, as he returned; "but, of a truth, there is deep need of it. In brief, I will acquaint you with the matter, for time presses. Three days since Charles accepted fully the conditions of the army, as I wrote you on Monday. The adjutators are brought over. The parliament must come to our terms. So far all's well. But, with the dawn to-day, a letter came to me at Windsor; from one who has conveyed us much intelligence, and never has deceived us, a friend in the king's bedchamber, *verbum sat!* He writes us that Charles Stuart hath been all yesterday in deep debate with Ashburnham, that firebrand of the queen's; that their resolves are taken; and that a letter — of a surety in cipher, but, then, we hold the key, the Lord be thankful for it—is prepared for Henrietta, to be conveyed right cunningly this night to Dover by an unconscious messenger. What the contents may be our friend might

not discover, though, as he writes, he left no stone un turned; but of this he is certain, that it is all-important, and decisive of the king's intention as to the pending treaty. This letter we *must* intercept; and, therefore, we rode straight in this disguise to Brentford, and thence took boat, to baffle prying eyes; and, so far, all goes rightly. Now attend! the bearer of this letter will come at ten o'clock to-night, carrying a saddle on his head, to the Blue Boar in Holborn, thence to take horse for Dover. The man will wear a green plush riding-coat, and breeches of the same; the elbows of the doublet and the seams of the trunk-hose guarded with neat-skin leather; a stammel waistcoat, and a red riband round his hat, which is of dark gray felt. The saddle will be old, and somewhat patched and ragged; and, in the off-side lap, between the tree and pannel, the letter is concealed. The man knows not that it is there, deeming he goes to buy a famous hunting horse from one John Styles, a horse-courser. He is to put up at the Red Lion inn in Dover; and there will be one, knowing his description, who shall search the saddle and — find nothing! for we must have the packet! How goes the night, Sir Edgar?"

"Past seven, I am sure; nay," after looking at his watch, "but it lacks scant a quarter of an hour of eight. I thought not that it was so late!"

"Nay, then, we are but just in time; you will go with us, sir, and aid us. We must have three, and know none else in whom we may so perfectly rely. You are aware that Charles is on parol not to hold secret interview with France—his parol broken, there is no breach of honesty or honor in seizing and perusing his dispatches. That package — open it quick, Ireton — contains a dress like these we now wear; the uniform of one who hath about your inches, borrowed for the nonce. It savors somewhat of tobacco-smoke and stale October, but we must not be nice. I pray you don it speedily. Nay, Ireton, you forget; where is the net to gather up his lovelocks, and the peruke? quick! quick!" he cried, impatiently binding up Edgar's flowing hair, and covering it with a foxy wig, close-clipped, and cut into a hundred little

peaks, like those which Cleaveland mentions in his Hue and Cry, deriding them as 'Hair in characters and luggs in text.'

Some pigment was laid on his eyebrows, whiskers, and mustache, suiting them to the color of his false hair. A kerchief of coarse cotton next replaced his collar of fine lace, and a garb similar to that of his companions was donned in lieu of his well-fancied habits. A clumsy broadsword was produced, with a wide leathern shoulder-belt, from under Cromwell's cloak; and this, with an old pair of his own military boots, carefully soiled for the occasion, and fitted with rough iron spurs, and an unpolished head-piece, completed his attire.

"Mind, now, your bearing," Cromwell said, as they left the house; "smoke without ceasing; jostle a little those whom we meet with in the streets, and quote the strongest texts you may remember. When that we reach the inn, the great gate will be closed, the wicket only open. We will all enter in, and drink till half past nine of the clock; then go forth you, as if upon some errand; loiter about the gate until you see our man; follow in after him, and, when he passeth up the yard — for he will go directly to the stables — bar instantly the wicket, and advise us! Now let us move on somewhat smartly."

Without more words, they took their way across the town toward Holborn, through quarters which, though now the very heart and the most populous portion of the giant city, were then but sparsely built upon, with frequent gardens intervening between the scattered tenements, and miry lanes, unlighted and ill paved, instead of regular streets. The night continued dark, and so unpleasant that, when they reached at length the mighty thoroughfare of Holborn, the street was half deserted and nearly silent. Smoking much as they passed along, and speaking little, they reached the well-known hostelry. Its gate, as Cromwell had foreseen, was closed and locked; but a low wicket door gave ingress to the yard, a long, irregular space, surrounded on three sides by the rambling buildings of the inn, with three tiers, one above the other, of open galleries, through which was the access to

the chambers, and bounded at the end by a long range of granaries and pack-stables. The yard was nearly dark; for but one lamp shone dimly over the entrance of the public room, just at the left hand of the gateway as they entered; and, except the lanterns of the hostlers flitting about the farther buildings, no other lights were visible within; but, as if to make up for the deficiency, a large glass lamp on either side the gateway rendered the street in front of it as light as day. They entered the tap-room abruptly, in which some four or five grave-looking citizens were comforting themselves, after the business of the day, with poached eggs and canary, buttered ale, burnt sack, and half a dozen other drinks and dishes fashionable in those days, but long ago forgotten; and found seats in an obscure corner of the apartment.

"Ho! landlord!" shouted Cromwell, "bring us three cans of your best double ale — good measure, and be quick about it! Surely, my flesh doth thirst for a cool drink, even as the faint spirit thirsteth for a soul-searching exposition of the mysteries that be essential to salvation."

"Such as Lieutenant Profit-by-the-word poured forth to our great edifying yester even," Ireton answered; "verily, good man, he was upheld most marvellously. Four hours did he hold forth steadily, not waxing faint in flesh nor weary in well-doing, but borne along in spirit with exceeding fervor, and his voice ringing like trumpet, louder at every close. Truly, a second Boanerges."

"Ay! and he touched with the true unction on that hard rock which splits all weaker vessels, the full justification of the soul by faith, the utter needlessness of works to save, when that the soul is filled; ay, as a tankard that doth overflow its brim — and lo! my can is out. Ho! tapster, fill us the good black gallon jack, and fetch us more tobacco — or as a mill-dam that doth burst its banks, with the true grace of God!"

"Yea!" answered Ireton, "yea verily he did; but I bethought me somewhat that he o'ershot the mark when he did undertake to prove that those who have been once

in grace may never relapse into sin, and that unto the pure all things are pure and holy."

"Why, you must be an infidel," returned the other. "What! know you not that vice and virtue be but names —not of aught tangible or real — not of things that exist without the body — but of mere fantasies, abstractions whose seat is in the mind. Surely it is the spirit in which a thing is done, and not the thing itself, that makes the virtue or the vice. Lo! when you slay a man in hand to hand encounter, fighting, it may be, in the deadly breach, or riding on the cannon's mouth, truly it is imputed not as an act of sin, but an heroical and manly deed of glory — as when strong Samson killed his thousands — ay, or, yet more to the point, when Heber's wife the Kenite smote Sisera within the tent and slew him, though a suppliant and a guest; but had she driven in that self-same nail to satisfy vile lust of gain or murtherous revenge, then had it been guilt in her — shame while on earth and infamy — and, though we should not judge — judgment hereafter and perdition. Thus, in the soul is the distinction; it maketh its own righteousness, it maketh its own sin! All that is done for virtue becomes virtue. To whom all things *seem* pure, verily, all things *are* pure! Yea, if a man have the grace given him to look upon that which, to the unregenerate, would be the darkest and most damning sin, and to believe it lawful — verily, then, to him it *would* be lawful!"

Thus he continued, plunging into the wildest and most bewildering depths of metaphysics, half acting, as it seemed to Edgar, an unreal character, and half believing what he said; while Ireton, an enthusiast in politics, but sober and clear-headed in religious matters as compared with others of his class, kept up the conversation merely to play the part assigned him; and Edgar, who — as Cromwell had once said in his defense against some who had termed him cavalier and half malignant, had not the gift to preach or pray, yet had the gift to counsel more advisedly and fight more fearlessly than any sniveller of them all—joined not at all in the discourse, but smoked his pipe and drained his horn in silence till the appointed time arrived—when, making some excuse to his com

panions, he left the tap-room, and strolled out into the street.

Here he lounged carelessly about, now gazing vacantly into the lighted window of some cookshop, now feigning some attempt at gallantry toward such wandering damsels as had neither been deterred from their nocturnal walks by the unpleasant weather nor by the rigid morals of the Puritans, and most successfully maintaining—while he, in truth, kept a strict watch both up and down the street—the semblance of a mere loitering idler. Just as the clock was chiming the first stroke of ten, he saw his man approaching, bearing a saddle on his head, and clad precisely as had been described. He was a tall, stout, servant-looking fellow, ruddy and fresh-complexioned, but without one gleam of intellect in his broad, jovial face; the last man in the world one would have taken for a spy or trusted emissary. This Edgar saw, as he passed by him near a lighted shop; he suffered him to get some dozen paces in advance, and then, with a slow, sauntering gate, pursued him. He saw him stoop beneath the wicket, and, without looking to the right or left, walk up the yard toward a group of hostlers playing at odd or even on a horseblock round a dingy lantern. Silently and unseen he dropped the bar across the wicket, and looked into the taproom.

"Tarry," said Cromwell, "tarry yet a while; the bird is ours!"

In a few minutes the sound of a horse's hoofs were heard upon the pavement. "Now, then," cried Oliver, "now!" and, instantly unsheathing his long tuck, he darted through the doorway, followed immediately by Ireton and Sir Edgar, likewise with drawn swords. Cromwell had reached the man before they overtook him; but Arden heard him say, "You ride forth late, my friend, but we be placed here in the name and by the orders of the parliament to search all goers-out. But, verily, thou lookest like an honest lad. Thou hast, I warrant me, nothing that thou wouldst care to hide!"

"Not I, i'faith," replied the stranger, bluntly; "search

away, Master Soldier, if such be your orders, but I pray you delay me not, because I am in haste."

"Lead the man's horse into the stable," Fast-and-Pray," said Cromwell, glancing his eyes toward Ireton, "'t were shame to let the dumb beast stand here in the pelting rain; and thou, good Win-the-fight, come in with us. Verily, friend, we will not long detain thee; but a horn of ale will not harm thee this dark night, I trow."

"Not it, not it!" replied the fellow; "what would you have now?"

"Oh! turn thy pockets out. Surely we will not be too hard with thee. Well! well! this is a purse; good lack, a heavy one! and this is a letter 'to Master Styles, horse courser, Dover!' Look sharp that he be not too deep for thee, this John Styles—he played our Colonel Whalley a foul trick with a spavined jade some two years past. He is a keen blade. Well! this is a pipe; and this a 'bacco-box; so! so!—in these there is no treason. Truly, I said thou wert an honest fellow; and I was not deceived. Another cup of ale? Tush, never mince the matter, 't will warm thee more than thy plush jerkin. Upseys! so! down with it like lambs-wool. Well, thou mayst go now, so thou wilt not tarry and have a rouse with us. Ho! Fast-and-Pray, bring out the worthy fellow's horse; he is not such as we be sent to look for, and—now I think of it—our time of watch is ended." A quick glance interchanged with his son-in-law assured the general that the letter was secured; so, slapping the messenger upon the back, he bade him mount, and God go with him; and as he rode away, unconscious that his journey was now useless, the three companions hurried to Arden's house, where they might profit by their prize in safety.

A short half hours' walk placed them before his door; so quickly, goaded to their utmost speed by anxious curiosity, did they retrace their steps. Lights were set in the library, the curtains closely drawn, the door locked, and then Ireton produced the packet; it was a small dispatch, and fastened with a plain flaxen cord and ordinary seal, addressed to "Master Ephraim Macklewerth"—ev-

idently a feigned name—"at the Red Lion, Dover." Within this was a small letter, simply directed to H. M. R., bound with a skein of white floss silk, and fastened with the impression of a finely-cut antique upon green wax. Oliver caught it with an impatient gesture from the hand of Ireton, broke the seal, cast his eyes hastily upon it, and exclaiming, "Nay, it is not in cypher," read thus aloud:—

"DEAREST AND BEST MARIE—

"I have received your kind and most consoling letter of July, from the tried friend who bore it. The wisdom of your counsels I acknowledge, and, so far as in *me* lies, will follow them. But, trust me, girl, better and brighter days are yet in store for us. I do assure you I am even now more *king*—more powerful and free—than ere I raised my standard; so that I doubt not, with a little patience and a small share of *finesse*, all shall be yet as we would have it. I am now courted by all parties—English and Scottish—Presbyterians, Independents—parliament and army—all prostrate at my feet—all rivals for my favor, and balanced, too, so equally, that whom I join soever carries the day. In truth, chiefly do I incline toward the Scots; but, for the present, *seem*, for my own purposes, to favor more the army. In the end, whoso bids the highest has me. You disapprove, you tell me, my 'promising so much to those two villains, Ireton and Cromwell.' Now, I beseech you, be not alarmed nor troubled; but leave *me* to manage, who am informed far better of all circumstances than you, by any means, can be; and on this head rest altogether easy, for in due season I shall know how to deal with these rogues, *who, for a silken garter, shall be fitted with a hempen rope!* This by a mode that can by no chance fail; wherefore, though briefly—as my space compels—I yet write plainly. If all things prosper with me, as I have now good cause to deem they will—for all the factions, themselves cozened, look on the others as outwitted—I shall once more embrace the well-beloved queen and mistress of my heart, greater and far more powerful than ever, ere many months shall pass, in our own palace of Whitehall.

"Until the Lord, in his good time, shall bring which things to pass,

"Your loving husband and idolater,

"C. R."

With a calm voice, though bitter in the extreme and scornful, Cromwell read out this document. Ireton's eye flashed fire, and, as his father-in-law ended, he violently dashed his hand upon the table—

"Whose dogs are we," he cried, in fierce and ringing tones, "that we should be thus scandalously dealt with? As the Lord liveth he shall die the death!"

"But three days since," said Cromwell, "hypocrite that he is, base knave, and liar, he proclaimed, through me, his full acceptance of the army's terms—his last words were, 'and for myself henceforth I hold me bound by them!' and I, fool that I was, *I* did rejoice, and triumphed in my heart that England should have peace! and now—he will *hang* both us! ay, HANG! Can there be any trust in such a man?"

"None!" answered Edgar, mournfully, "there can indeed be none. It is long since I have even dreamed there could. He is unstable as the sands of the seashore, and false—as fortune!"

"Alas! alas! for England!" Oliver exclaimed, in deep impressive tones. "If it be thy will, mighty Lord, that this thy servant be a prey and victim to this man of Belial, truly I am prepared. But for this goodly and regenerate land, for this oppressed and miserable people, in whose behalf already many times thou hast displayed the wonders of thy might, the miracles of thine invincible right hand, not for myself—not for myself, oh Lord, poor sinner that I am and leaky vessel, do I presume now to remonstrate, to strive earnestly—to wrestle as did Jacob in the dark—against thy great decrees—but for this lovely isle—this precious England!"

"With Caiaphas *I* say," returned the fiery Ireton, with Caiaphas! Jew though he was, unrighteous judge, and murtherer of the Lord's anointed! 'Ye know not'—'t is to you I say it, my friends and fellow-soldiers—' nor consider

that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not!' "

This bold speech for that night ended the debate. Cromwell was silent; though the remarkable and resolute compression of his mouth, and the deep frown that furrowed his high forehead, and the determined gleam of his hard eye, showed that his silence was produced by anything rather than doubt or fear; and Arden, at this last and heaviest blow, was, for the moment, wholly overcome. He saw the certain peril, the imminent and overwhelming ruin, but he saw neither refuge nor escape. He felt that, while Charles lived, England could never be at rest; but he did *not* feel that his death would give her that repose which she desired now more almost than liberty.

In gloom that evening they had met; in deeper gloom they parted; save Ireton alone, who seemed elate and almost joyous. For, fraught with a sincere unselfish patriotism that would not have disgraced an ancient Roman, a wild and daring theorist, a confident and bold believer in the perfectibility of man and in the supreme excellence of democratic form, he fancied that he now foresaw the advent of his dearest wishes, the overthrow of monarchy and aristocracy forever, the birth of a seagirt republic, the creation of a British state, unequalled in the annals of the world! more wise and eloquent than the free Athens! in morals more severe than Sparta! in grace more elegant than Corinth! in empire, arms, and glory more magnificent than Rome!

CHAPTER IV.

A MUTINY SUPPRESSED.

Illo. Treason and mutiny!
Tertsky. And what farther now?
Illo. Tiefenbach's soldiers, when I gave the orders
To go off guard. Mutinous villains!
Wallenstein. What followed?
Illo. They refused obedience to them.
Tertsky. Fire on them instantly! Give out the order.
COLERIDGE FROM SCHILLER.—*Wallenstein.*

SADLY and wearily the year wore onward; the golden days of summer were already passed; the leaves, which had so greenly flourished a few weeks before, grew sere like human hopes, and were whirled wildly from their hold by each succeeding blast. Autumn had waned already into winter; yet still the leaders of the army, after their seizure of the fatal letter, which necessarily ruined the king's cause, remained inactive, as it seemed, at Windsor; but, in truth, hushed in grim repose, and waiting the maturity of those events which they foresaw distinctly, and expected with a stern and vengeful pleasure.

Meantime the privates became every day more restless and ungovernable. Distrusting their own officers, while they held daily intercourse with the king's friends, now that they had withdrawn themselves from all communication with him, they imagined not that the correspondence was indeed at an end, but that some scheme had been determined to the exclusion and betrayal of their interests, and raved accordingly in their religious and political assemblies with equal fury against the carnal-minded parliament and the grandees, as they now termed their own superior officers.

The regiment of Arden was perhaps the only one of the whole army which had entirely resisted this contagion; for having taken arms, many from personal attachment to their young leader, whose neighbors or tenants formed a great portion of the soldiers, many from a sense of political oppression, but none from any feeling

of fanaticism or religious fury; the most part being of the Episcopal persuasion, they looked on unconcerned, while their companions were indulging in the loudest tumults, and reposed all their trust in the high talents and integrity of their commander.

Often times, since the memorable evening of the intercepted letter, Cromwell and Arden had debated on the next step to be taken, and on the future prospects of their country; and both had often and again grieved at their inability to shape out any course by which they might hope confidently to eschew the breakers, which they could see directly in their track.

Both clearly saw that the king's union with the Presbyterians would but be the beginning of a worse tyranny, both in the church and state, than that which they had overthrown; and both saw likewise that with these, rather than with the army, he would assuredly at last make common cause. Cromwell, in this dilemma, hinted, rather than openly declared, his own opinion, founded in part upon the evident determination of the army, that the king should be brought to trial, and, if found guilty, suffered to reap the harvest of his perjury, dissimulation, and oppression; yet, while maintaining both the policy and justice of the measure, he was still at a loss to say what plan should be adopted for the future government of England, thus to be left without a head.

Avowing himself favorable to a mixed form, composed, as heretofore, of three estates, with the executive department vested in one officer of ample powers though limited, he yet could point out none on whom the choice could fall with safety and propriety. Sir Edgar, on the other hand—acknowledging the perfect justice, doubted the policy, of the king's execution—thinking that wilder anarchy would follow at the first, and ultimately either the Presbyterian influence, which they now chiefly feared, prevail, or one strong-handed military tyrant rise from the chaos of licentious freedom.

Ireton, in the meantime, the leader of a powerful faction, declared at all times his desire for a republic, founded upon a general franchise of the whole people; and Harrison, who represented a yet more fanatical and phren-

sied party, calling themselves fifth-monarchists, looking forward to the near approach of the millennium, and, arrogating to themselves an absolute perfection, claimed an equality of rights, of power, and of property for all men. All of these, however, alike agreed on the expedience of awaiting the occurrence of some overt action on the part of Charles or of the Presbyterians.

For this they had not, indeed, long to tarry; for, on the morning of the twelfth day of November, the gentlemen whose office it was to wait upon his chamber found that the king was not there, and that his bed had not been used that night. Three letters in his own handwriting lay upon the table; two to the parliament, one to the speaker of each house, and a third to the General Fairfax. After the first excitement had subsided, it was discovered that Sir John Berkeley, Legg, and Ashburnham were missing; and the hoof marks of four horses were traced readily in the moist ground close to the pastern of the garden, into which there was a private passage from the chamber of the king. In none of the three letters was it stated whither he had fled, but simply that he had found it needful to withdraw himself, in consequence, as he was well assured, of plots existing for his assassination, and that he should hold himself concealed until some settlement was made for the well-governance and quiet of the kingdom.

The news of this escape produced the greatest tribulation in the houses. It was believed, and generally dreaded, that the king was in hiding somewhere within the city; that the Presbyterian party and the royalists had privily united, and that a sudden rising would ensue, and massacre of all opposed to it. An act passed instantly, prohibiting, on pain of death and confiscation, any persons from harboring the king without conveying notice to the parliament. Expresses were sent off to every seaport town, laying a strict embargo on all vessels; and every person who had fought on the king's side in the late wars was banished from the city, and any other place within a circuit of ten miles round London. Meanwhile the hapless monarch, having ridden day and night toward the southwestern coast, frustrated, by the mismanagement, or, as

some say, the treachery of Ashburnham, in his desire of taking ship from the New Forest, sought refuge for a space at Titchfield House in Hampshire; and, finally, with an incomprehensible degree of folly, surrendered himself to Hammond, a strict friend of Cromwell, governor of the Isle of Wight.

It was the second day after the flight of Charles, while yet the commons were in much confusion and dismay, that Cromwell, rising in his place with such an air of satisfaction as led many to suppose that he was privy to the whole proceedings, announced that he had received letters from Colonel Hammond—a man so honest and devoted to the service of the parliament that they should not distrust him, nor imagine him incapable of standing against any method of corruption—to the effect that Charles, with all his company, was now held in all honor, but with due care to his safe-keeping, in the stronghold of Carisbrook, until the pleasure of the houses should be known.

Quieted instantly by this assurance, the parliament proceeded to draw up and remit to Charles four acts, containing in effect, a greater cession of his powers than any heretofore demanded, as the sole terms on which they would treat with him now at all. These he at once refused, and was, in consequence, committed into closer custody, means being taken, by the removal of his royalist attendants and otherwise, to frustrate all attempts at a new flight. At the same time the Scotch commissioners went down with the conditions he had at Hampton Court indignantly rejected, by which they should engage to invade England with sufficient force to establish him upon the throne, but on condition that the prince and queen should presently repair to Scotland; that the presbytery and church-directory should be at once enforced throughout all England; and that a large proportion of the northern counties should be ceded to the sister kingdom; and, in that moment of despair, these crafty plotters prevailed with him to sign and ratify that secret treaty—a treaty as injurious as degrading to his English subjects, and far more rigorous in its restrictions on himself than the easier terms which his unalterable hatred and contempt of parliament had led him peremptorily to refuse.

On the fifteenth of the same month, a statement of the king's escape, his present secure situation, and the propositions tendered to him by the parliament, was sent down to the army, with a remonstrance ably penned by Fairfax, refuting the strong calumnies which had been cast against the principal commanders, and setting forth the motives of their conduct. Armed with this potent document, Cromwell, as the most firm, and, at the same time, best-beloved of all the officers, was selected to this perilous but honorable duty; and, taking with him Arden's well disciplined and trusty regiment, without delay or hesitation he repaired to Ware. This place was, at that time, the headquarters of some five or six thousand soldiers at the least, who, stimulated by their adjutators, and believing that the flight of Charles was preconcerted and connived at by the *grandees* of the host, were in state of turbulence bordering closely upon actual mutiny. It was about eleven of the clock on a bright frosty morning that Cromwell, with his small life-guard, reached Ware. Causing his trumpets to sound through the streets, he summoned all the regiments to get themselves together orderly upon the green, to hear a proclamation from the lord general; and, ere this summons had been well delivered, they turned out, not, indeed, orderly or in good discipline, but in loud and tumultuous disarray.

They were all under arms, although expressly contrary to orders; two regiments especially of musketeers, who had their caps adorned with ribands, inscribed as a motto of insubordination, with the words

"For the people's freedom and the soldier's right!"

were observed to be in full field order, with their bandoliers slung round them, and the matches of their harquebusses lighted. Among these, as Cromwell advanced slowly toward them, accompanied by Arden only, and followed at a little distance by a dismounted captain's guard with drawn swords, but no firearms—the remainder of the regiment halting in line a little farther in the rear—a wild disorganizing shout arose, "Equality of rights!

equality of rights! No king! no coalition! Down with the false grandees!"

But when, with his long sturdy strides, and his stern features perfectly calm, but resolute and hard as if they had been cast in iron, he had closed with them, the shouts ceased suddenly. Slowly he walked along their front, looking each private full and firmly in the eye; and few were there who dared to meet with an unblenching brow, his concentrated glare of anger and defiance. Halting at length directly opposite to the two regiments of musketeers, he drew out the proclamation.

"I have a paper here," he said, "to read to you from the lord-general. Not to mutineers, however, but to soldiers was I sent! Extinguish instantly those matches!" he added, in a tone somewhat louder, yet so severe and passionless, that one battalion obeyed on the moment. "How dare ye muster thus? Out of your caps with those unsoldierly and villain mottoes—out with them! Nay! but ye shall trample them beneath your feet!" and, awed by his immovable determination, the same battalion once again complied; while the great bulk of that tumultuous assembly looked on in abashed wonder, and, ordering as rapidly as possible their unmilitary and ill-dressed front, assumed an air of perfect discipline and a right soldierly demeanor. Not so the second regiment; for, brandishing their arms aloft, they raised a deep and scornful murmur, increasing gradually into a shout of absolute defiance. Nay, some brought down their harquebusses to the ready movement, and even cocked them; but not one man removed the motto of rebellion. It was a moment of anxiety, if not of real peril; for, though the great mass of the men were quiet, they yet wore an air of sullen and almost savage discontent, which clearly showed their temper, and made it but too probable than any overt action, of one company even, would kindle the whole body into a sudden blaze of fury.

"Heard ye not," Oliver proceeded, in a voice pitched several notes below his usual key, but so full of intense resolve, of quiet but indomitable spirit, that it thrilled to the hearts of all who heard it, even of those who still resisted, "or do ye *dare* to disobey me? You sir," he

continued, stepping close up to the ranks, which now began to waver somewhat, and confronting a gigantic lance-spesade, "order your arms!" and the man, overawed by his demeanor, slowly and sulkily obeyed. "Shame! shame!" cried several voices from the rear; "thou braggart, that wouldst do so much, to shrink at the first word!"

"Silence there in the ranks!" Oliver cried, fiercely, and at his word again the murmurs ceased; but, brief and trivial as they were, those murmurs had yet roused anew a spirit of resistance in the bosom of the half-terrified ringleader. Silent he stood indeed, but his mouth worked convulsively, a red flush overspread his countenance, and his hand quivered as it grasped the barrel of his musket.

"Soh! thou art then a soldier," continued Cromwell, once more confronting the delinquent. "Now, then, pull forth that rascal riband from thy cap! Cast it, I say, into the dust, and set thy foot upon it!"

The man spoke not, but bit his lip till the blood spirted forth, moving, however, no limb or muscle of his body, whether to execute or to resist his officer's command.

"Do as I bid thee, dog!" and with a flash of furious and ungovernable ire lighting up every feature of his face, Cromwell stamped his heel on the turf as though he was in act of trampling down a living foeman.

"No dog of thine, at least," answered the fellow; "though, if thou hadst the will, all Englishmen would be as slaves and dogs beneath thee."

"Ha! this to me!" and, seizing the gigantic trooper by the throat, he shook him to and fro as though he were an infant, and cast him, almost, as it seemed, without an effort, to the earth behind him. "Seize him, guards, ho! Ye answer for him with your lives. He is a ringleader; and, as the Lord of earth and heaven liveth, verily he shall die the death!" and, as he spoke, his handful of assistants dragged off the prisoner, struggling and shouting for a rescue, and placed him in security among their mounted comrades. But, quickly as they did his bidding, yet quicker was the movement of the captive's right-hand man to succor or avenge him, who, at the

very point of time when Cromwell seized the lance-spesade, levelled his harquebuss right at his head, within six feet. Arden dashed forward, sword in hand, followed by six or eight of his most active men, while his lieutenant shouted to the horsemen in the rear to charge! Yet, had their aid been needed, the career of Oliver had been concluded on that day in a poor, paltry riot—but it was not needed! for, in the very act of capturing the one, that keen-eyed and quick-witted leader observed the motion of the other mutineer! Before the heavy din, with which the armor of the first clanged as he fell, was ended, his broadsword gleamed aloft in the bright sunshine — down it came whistling through the air — down, like a flash of lightning, and, with his scull cleft through his head-piece to the chin, the second plunged head foremost, a dead man ere he touched the earth, his harquebuss discharged, though harmlessly, by the convulsed and quivering fingers after the life had left the body.

He paused not for a second's space to suffer them to rally or recover from the consternation which had fallen on them with all the chilling influence of a panic terror, but, "Charge!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder, "charge the rebellious dogs. Kill! kill! spare none who dare resist!" and, with the word, Arden rushed in, and faithfully his gallant men requited the trust placed in their allegiance. Firmly, as though they had outnumbered their opponents, that little handful dashed into the breach which Cromwell's energy had made already in the rebellious ranks; and at a full trot, with their rapiers leveled to the charge, up swept the horsemen. But the fall of their ringleaders, and the undaunted bearing of their officers, were too much for their nerves; and, ere the guard was on them, their musket-buts rang heavily as they were ordered simultaneously, and the obnoxious badges, torn with quick hands from every head-piece, fluttered on all sides in the air, or strewed the turf before their feet.

"Halt! ho! halt, Colonel Arden!" shouted Oliver, perceiving instantly and profiting by his advantage; but scarcely was his second cry in time; for, though they curbed their chargers as the word reached their ears, the

cavalry stopped not until their horses' chests were close upon their wavering ranks, and their long rapiers waving over their heads. "Draw off your horse, Major Winthrop," he continued; "advance six files dismounted — arrest each tenth man of the lance-spesades through this battalion. Verily they shall learn, and that right speedily, what be the fruits of mutiny. Officers to the front; call a drum-head court-martial!" Not a man stirred, and not a weapon was advanced, as, one by one, the decimated prisoners were arrested. Before ten minutes had passed over, ten or a dozen officers assembled to perform the saddest and most painful duty that ever falls even to a soldier's lot. The crime had been too flagrant; the proof too evident; the peril too immediate, to admit of lenity; and, without one dissenting voice, the fatal sentence was pronounced on all the wretched criminals, some five or six in number, who, now disarmed and bound, stood waiting the award in speechless agony.

"A file for execution!" Oliver exclaimed, in his most harsh and grating tones; "draw out a file for execution from that same regiment! Lead forth that fellow whom I seized myself; he was the very foremost of them all, and may not hope for mercy! This grace will I accord the rest—they shall cast lots among them; but one must expiate his sins, before his country and his God, ere the world be ten minutes older; and may the Lord have mercy on their souls! The rest will I refer unto the parliament."

The lots were speedily prepared; and, with an air of the most agonizing terror, anxiety, and hope, and fear blended into a fierce excitement, which it was truly awful even to look upon, the miserable wretches plunged their hands into the helmet which contained the scraps of paper on which their lives depended. It was a moment of intense and shuddering pain, even to those who, in comparative indifference, were mere spectators of the scene; what must it then have been to those, of whom one certainly was destined to be sent from the fair face of the bright, laughing earth, unhouseled and unshriven, into the presence of his Maker, with scarce a moment

even to prepare the spirit for endurance of the fearful shock which should disjoin it from the body.

The lottery of death was ended. The soldier, whose hard fate had been thus chance-decided, was a small, delicate, pale-looking man; of a weak frame, and a countenance effeminate, and betokening anything save energy of mind or resolution. Yet was this frail and nerveless being perfectly cool and self-collected; while his companion, taken in the very act, limbed like a Hercules, with high, bold features and a brilliant eye, a man who would have ridden fearlessly, although alone, upon a stand of levelled pikes, or rushed upon a cannon's mouth just as the linstock was applied; shook like an aspen leaf through all his powerful frame; his brow, his cheek, his lip, grew white as ashes; his eye was dim and senseless; he sobbed, he wept aloud, struggling violently with the troopers who conducted him to his last stand on earth, and yelling phrensiedly for mercy. With an air perfectly composed and fearless, the other threw aside his cassock and his vest, unbound the kerchief from his neck, giving it as a token to a favorite fellow-soldier, and having, in a clear, unfaltering voice, confessed the justice of his sentence, and exhorted his companions to take warning from his fate, he bowed respectfully to those who had condemned him, and stepped as lightly to the place of execution as though it were his choice to die. There they stood, side by side, full of strong health, and intellect, and life, and passion, in one short moment to be mere clods of soulless and unconscious clay; and there, with their death-weapons levelled, paler themselves and far more agitated than even those on whom they were to do the work of blood, the firing party, chosen from the ranks of the same regiment, composed, perhaps, of messmates, of familiar friends, of proved associates in many a scene of peril and of glory, perhaps of comrades, plotters, instigators to the very crime which *they* were destined to avenge, *their friends* to expiate, their partners, without doubt, in this last fatal deed of guilt, and now their executioners!

The regiments were drawn up forming three sides of a great hollow square, the criminals upon the fourth, the

executioners already facing them at scarce ten paces distant. There was not a voice, a sigh, a movement in that mighty concourse; not a weapon clashed, not a foot rustled on the earth. But the sun shone in glorious beauty upon the burnished pike-heads and the waving standards; and the whole earth looked gay and smiling, more gay, more smiling, as it seemed to the poor criminals, than ever it had been before. A short, extemporaneous prayer was uttered by the captain of their own battalion; a sad and doleful hymn was chanted by the now penitent and terrified assemblage, with a sound inexpressibly and strangely mournful. The fatal word was given! a bright flash, and a sharp report as of a single piece! and, when the smoke cleared off, there lay the bodies on the sod, lifeless and motionless, their sins and sorrows thus simultaneously and suddenly concluded. There was no need of more severity; and the quick eye of Cromwell saw it. With the yet warm and palpitating bodies in full view, he read aloud the general's message, the soldiery listening to every word with a respectful and sincere attention, that denoted all the force of the example they had witnessed. As he concluded, every regiment presented, and then ordered arms; the adjutators humbly advanced from the crest-fallen ranks, and with a deferential air expressed their complete satisfaction at the lord-general's exposition, their sense of their own past misconduct, and their gratitude to Cromwell for the mercy he had shown them, in taking but two lives where all so righteously were forfeit.

After a few more words of reprimand, blended with commendations of their former services, and exhortations never to offend in the like sort hereafter, Oliver, whose point was amply gained, dismissed the soldiers; and the bands striking up in the impressive notes of a dead march, with colors trailed and arms reversed, they filed off to their several quarters, well convinced now that, howsoever their commanders might connive at disobedience to the parliament, they would in no sort tolerate or wink at the most trivial mutiny against their own authority. In fact, by his undaunted resolution in suppressing, and his inflexible severity in punishing the present disaffection,

joined to the partial lenity he had extended to his prisoners, Cromwell had more than regained all that he had temporarily lost in the opinions of the army. Never, perhaps, at any previous time had he stood higher in power, or possessed more fully the respect and admiration, not unmixed with wholesome fear, of those whom he commanded, than at the present moment.

The next night, in the most magnificent of England's palaces, in the great hall of Windsor Castle, the officers of that victorious army, which had not merely conquered, but annihilated, the high faction of the cavaliers; defeated the intrigues of the Scotch Presbyterians, seen through and cut asunder—if they had not disentangled—the gordian knot of parliamentary chicane, assembled in most solemn but most secret council.

There, actuated by a single spirit, and speaking, as it were, all with one common voice, which they asserted, and perhaps believed, such is the force of the heart's self-deception, to be a direct proof that He—whom they had sought so long in prayer, earnestly dealing with him that he should let that cup pass from them — had put the counsel by immediate inspiration into their hearts—those stern religionists determined that, as a traitor, murderer, and tyrant, Charles Stuart should be arraigned, and brought to answer for his deeds before the high court of the nation in parliament assembled.

It was remarked even then, and deeply pondered on in after days, as something singular and strange, by Arden, who was not present at the council, having remained in London on his return from Ware, but who was instantly apprised of the proceedings—that, neither before that assemblage, nor publicly at any other time, did Oliver urge on or advocate, with his accustomed fervor, the measure which, as Sir Edgar knew full well, he had long since determined on within his secret heart.

It seemed as though he did not choose himself to stir at all in that which had been mooted by the common soldiery in the first instance, and advanced by insubordination verging on open mutiny. Rather, perhaps, seeing that, without his personal coöperation in the matter, all things were tending to the result which he believed the

best, he was content to lend them the mere negative support afforded by his presence at deliberations, which he did not oppose or hinder, wisely reserving his great energies for the accomplishment of those great ends which could not be wrought to maturity without them; and holding himself, like the gods of the Grecian drama, aloof from matters which afforded no due scope for his unconquerable powers — from plots which could as well be disentangled and wound smoothly out by those, who had, perhaps, imbibed his own opinions, and were unconsciously — while fancying themselves free and untrammelled agents--the mere tools and instruments of his superior intellect.

CHAPTER V.

JUDGMENT OR THE KNIFE?

"Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar,
And in the spirit of men there is no blood;
Oh that we, then, could come by Cæsar's spirit,
And not dismember Cæsar. But, alas!
Cæsar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds."

JULIUS CÆSAR.

The indignation of the parliament, who, after the retreat of the eleven impeached members, had more and more come into the strong measures of the army, was fearfully inflamed by the king's absolute refusal of the four acts; so much so that a bill was passed forbidding all addresses for the future to Charles Stuart, and all renewal of negotiations with him for a settlement, though not till after two or three debates, in which the military leaders, and, above all, the lieutenant-general, took active part.

The last, indeed, on one occasion, ended a long and strenuous harangue by raising his voice to its highest pitch with these emphatic words, "Teach not the army, by neglecting your own safety and that of the kingdom, by which theirs also is involved, to deem themselves betrayed, and their best interests abandoned to the rage of an irreconcilable enemy, whom, for your sake, they have dared to provoke. Beware"—and, as he spoke, he laid his hand upon his rapier's hilt—"beware, lest their despair cause them to seek safety by some other means than by adhering to you, who know not to consult for your own safety."

And now, although the peril from the army's insubordination had subsided, not a day passed without some riotous commotion, indicative of the divided state of public feeling. Continual tumults between the London mob, now become once more loyal to the king, and the detachments of the veterans quartered in the metropolis, were not suppressed without some bloodshed. These, in the early spring, were followed by a general movement of the royalists throughout the kingdom, which, had it been planned with as much of concert and of wisdom as it was executed with high bravery and spirit, would have caused much perplexity to those in power.

As it was, however, so ill-timed and unpremeditated were the risings of the cavaliers, that they were easily subdued in detail, although their numbers, if united, would have been truly formidable, and although they fought, as individual bodies, with all the resolution of despair, and in no case were vanquished without loss and difficulty by the Independent army. The men of Kent were beaten, after a hard-fought and well-disputed battle, at Maidstone, by the lord-general in person; the royalists of Wales, under the gallant Colonel Poyer, were defeated, and Pembroke, into which they had retired, taken by Cromwell after a six weeks' siege. This exploit over, that indefatigable leader hurried northward with all his wonted energy of movement, came on the Scottish army, now united with the northern cavaliers of Langdale, at Preston on the Ribble; and, though with forces vastly inferior, hesitated not to give them battle. Having defeated them

so utterly that their army was, in truth, wholly disorganized and scattered, he pursued them closely into Scotland, where he compelled the citizens of Edinburgh, deeply averse and hostile to his party, to put down the royalists, and to replace the power of the state in Argyle's hands, who had now joined the Independent faction with his whole heart and spirit.

While there, the Earl of Leven and Sir David Lesley so totally disclaimed the covenant as to cannonade the roy alist troops from the castle, and to agree, at a convention held in my Lady Home's house in the Canongate, with Oliver, that there was a necessity, now fully obvious, for taking the king's life. Meanwhile Lord Goring, who had advanced to Blackheath, hoping that by his presence London would be encouraged into action, being checked by Fairfax, shut himself up in Colchester; but, after a long and vigorous defense, was forced, when all was over, to surrender at discretion; and had the farther misery of seeing two of his bravest officers, Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas, shot by the conquerors as rebels—a rigorous and cruel exercise of power, for which the general did not escape much obloquy, although it was alleged in his defense, and probably with truth, that he was instigated to such unwonted harshness solely by the suggestions of the fierce and unrelenting Ireton.

This absolute suppression of the king's friends by land was poorly compensated by the defection of the navy; Rainsborough, its commander for the parliament, having been set on shore by his rebellious crews, who bore away for Holland, and, casting anchor at the Brill, after a short time took on board the Prince of Wales, accompanied by Rupert, as their admiral; not in compliance with the wishes of the queen, who would have lavished that high dignity on her unworthy paramour, Lord Jermyn.

About the same time the young Duke of York, afterward James the Second, by the assistance and the skill of Colonel Bamfield, made good his flight from London, and reached the Netherlands in safety. And now, beyond all doubt, was the atrocious infidelity and wickedness of Henrietta proved, who—although the revolted fleet had full and undisputed mastery of the channel, and might,

with ease and certainty, have forcibly delivered Charles from the hard durance in which he was now held, after an unsuccessful effort to break forth at Carisbrook—prevailed upon the Prince of Wales to waste his time in frivolous and useless enterprises up the Thames and on the coasts, until the parliament had fitted out another fleet under the Earl of Warwick, when, after what a seaman would term lubberly manœuvering, he sailed toward Holland, closely pursued by Warwick's navy, and never performed any action serviceable to his unhappy father's cause or creditable to his own fame.

During the progress of the futile struggle, which had terminated in rendering obvious to all the hopelessness of any effort at armed interposition for the king, the parliament, while Cromwell was in Scotland, had held fresh negotiations at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, with Charles, who, to the last, despite the urgent prayers both of his friends and the more moderate of his opponents, refused compliance with the conditions offered, though he must now have apprehended this to be the only means by which he could retain possession of his crown. The temper of the commons, after receiving tidings of the king's unconquered obstinacy, evinced by the distaste of the majority toward an angry speech of Vane, so much alarmed the leaders of the army, that, finding Hammond more disposed toward the parliament than they had hoped, they caused by stratagem the custody of the king's person to be transferred to Colonel Ewre, a man entirely in their interests, and ordered him to be removed at once to the strong solitary fortress of Hurst Castle, on the coast of Hampshire.

A letter from the commons to the general, demanding instant restitution of the royal person to his former guardian and abode, was answered by a demand for payment of arrears due to the army, and, after a few days, by the march of the most zealous and enthusiastic regiments to London; where the general took up his quarters at Whitehall, and other officers with their detachments at Durham House, the King's Mews, Covent Garden, Westminster, and St. James's Palace. Still, undeterred by this bold step, the Presbyterian party, after a violent debate, car-

ried it, by a majority of thirty-six against the Independents and the army faction, that "the king's answer was a ground, upon which for the houses to proceed for the settlement of the peace of the kingdom."

A resolution which, had it been brought into force, would have effectually undone all that had been effected by the long and bloody strife which had preceded it, and left the king as powerful for good or evil as he had been at its commencement, provided he should, as his true policy would dictate, hold to the friendship of the parliament. That afternoon a large committee of the commons waited upon the general at his lodgings of Whitehall, but met from him only a supercilious and cold welcome, and no satisfaction. The following morning, when the members went to take their seats, a guard of musketeers was at the doors, headed by Colonel Pride and the Lord Grey of Groby, who held a list of those who should not be permitted to go into the debate, and these were kept three days in custody in different inns of court, while the remainder of the house, called afterward by royalists "the Rump," voted that the king's answer to the propositions was not satisfactory.

Sir Edgar, in the earlier part of the late tumults, had served with Fairfax, and, after the surrender of Colchester, had resigned his commission, disgusted by the fate of Lisle and Lucas. Meanwhile, however, he had been reëlected to the house, the Presbyterians considering his departure from the army as an earnest of his accession to their party, while the Independents, wiser in this than their antagonists, foresaw that, howsoever he might disapprove their violence, he would, at the least, never join their enemies. On this account, then, he was suffered by the soldiers to assume his seat, his name not being on the list of those excluded. The first step which he took was to move instantly for an inquiry into the causes of the present outrage, and though, when overruled in this by a majority of those remaining in the house, he coincided with the opinion that the king's answer was unsatisfactory, he refused peremptorily to give any vote on the occasion. Then, after several vain attempts to find out the devisers of the violence, Fairfax denying any knowledge

of it, and the guards merely stating that they had their orders, he at the first resolved to vacate his seat once again; but, after much reflection, held it the manlier and more upright course still to continue in the house, opposing, to the best of his abilities, all inroads on the liberties of Englishmen, in their most delicate and dearest point, the privilege of parliament.

Just at this juncture, indeed, upon the very evening of the day which had been signalized by the exclusion of the Presbyterian members, Cromwell returned from Scotland, and took up his abode in the king's palace of Whitehall. To him, indeed, Arden's suspicions had first pointed as the real mover of this outrageous measure; yet, on his charging it directly to him, he answered with so much of ready frankness, that "he had not been acquainted with the design, yet, since it was done, he was glad of it, and would endeavor to maintain it," and asked so warmly for his presence and advice at a council to be held that evening in the house of Ludlow, that he succeeded almost in convincing him that his suspicions were unfounded.

An early hour of the evening found Sir Edgar at the place appointed, where he was shown into a large well-lighted chamber, filled with about two score of gentlemen, for the most part the leaders of the army; among whom, at the first glance, he recognized Ireton, Harrison, and Lilburne, afterward nicknamed Trouble-world, with Hacker, Hutchinson resembling a cavalier in his rich dress and flowing hair, and some of the most eminent civilians, Sir Harry Vane the younger, and some few of the Presbyterian party, besides the master of the house, and Cromwell, who sat aloof, as it would seem, engrossed in weighty meditations. Fairfax was not among them. When Sir Edgar entered, Harrison was declaiming with much vehemence, as well of gesture as of speech, and not without a species of wild eloquence, against all forms of monarchy, which he asserted neither to be "good in itself, nor yet good for the people," quoting the whole eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel, and arguing therefrom "that to be governed by a king was in itself displeasing to the King and Monarch of the universe, and absolutely sinful; for that the Lord himself bade Samuel 'yet solemnly pro-

test unto them, and show the manner of the king that should reign over them;' and afterward foretold to them 'that ye shall cry out in that day, because of the king ye have chosen you, and the Lord shall not hear you in that day.' Wherefore," he added, "let us put away from us this sin, and this abomination; let us wash from our hands the stain of this iniquity; yea! let us cleanse ourselves with myrrh, with aloes, and with hyssop, ay, and with blood—even the blood of sacrifice!—from this offense which stinketh in the nostrils of Jehovah! And let this man—the firebrand of civil conflagration, the drawer of the slaughtering sword against his people, the slayer of our brethren and our sons, the spoiler of our vineyards and our oliveyards, this faithless gentleman and perjured prince, this tyrant, traitor, murderer, Charles Stuart, let him be driven out, even as the scapegoat sent into the wilderness to bear away the sins and sufferings of the people; let him be cut off utterly, and cast upon the dunghill, and let the dogs lick *his* blood, as they licked that of Ahab, when the Lord smote him by the arrow of the Syrian, smote him at Ramoth Gilead that he died; and let his name be never named in Israel from thenceforth ever more! So let it be with him, and let the people cry amen!"

To Harrison succeeded Ireton, and Ludlow after him, both urging the expediency of the king's death no less strongly than its justice, descanting loudly on the faithlessness which he had shown in all his previous dealings, "his often protestations and engagements in the name of king and gentleman which he hath so often violated;" and the small probability that any new bond or restraint of conscience should now be found to fetter one, whom neither his own coronation oath nor the laws which he had sworn to honor, uphold, and obey, could hinder from endeavoring to subvert his country's constitution, and build an autocratic throne upon the ruin of his people's freedom.

When these had finished speaking, Sir Edgar calmly but impressively addressed them, beseeching them to ponder deeply and pause long, ere they should take a step irrevocable, and, if it should prove evil, irretrievable and ruinous. Admitting, as fully as the warmest advocates

for the king's death, his guilt in aiming at supreme unconstitutional dominion; his guilt in plunging the whole population intrusted to his care, even as children to a father's charge, into the misery of civil slaughter, merely to gratify his own ambition; his guilt in violating every covenant and compact he had made; owning the utter hopelessness of any effort to establish peace while he should be within the realm, in how close custody soever; the folly of imagining that England's liberties could be in safety while he should hold the reins of government, how limited soever in his sway; declaring that he believed him in all justice to be guilty even unto death—"I yet conjure you," he exclaimed, "to pause before you shed his blood! If you depose him from the throne, and banish him the realm, you will gain all advantage that his death could give you, and more also!—you will disarm the tongues of those who would cry out against his execution, as against a sacrilegious and accursed parricide, and fill the very mouths that would be open to revile you, with praises of your clemency and grace. You will deprive him wholly of the means to do you evil, and you will have this farther safeguard, that, while he lives, no other can lay claim to England's crown, whereas, once dead, his son will instantly succeed to all his father's rights, and more than all his father's influence on the minds of men maddened with loyal sorrow and athirst for vengeance. It was a wise and politic saw of the old Romans, 'to spare the subject and subdue the proud!'

"To slay Charles Stuart is but to elevate a bad king to an honored martyr! to depose and banish him is to degrade him from a suffering prince into a scorned and abject beggar! Men will compassionate, and honor, ay! and bleed for royalty in chains, when they but jeer and scoff at royalty in tatters! Banish this man, and he may wander forth from court to court of Europe; he *may* be treated with mock deference, *may* be styled king and brother, and pensioned with the crumbs that fall from royal tables; but 't will be hollow all and insincere! Scorned and despised, he will drag out a life held by your sufferance, weary and painful to himself, and innocent to you even of momentary cause for apprehension!

"Slay him, and you will buckle harness on the back of each legitimate hereditary prince of Christendom against you!—you will concentrate and renerve the partisans of royalty now scattered, hopeless, and undone!—you will enkindle a consuming flame, which, though for a brief space it may smoulder or burn dimly, shall yet wax hourly more broad, and bright, and high, till it shall soar in triumph over the liberties of England, shrivelled again, and blasted, perchance, never to revive."

His views, shrewd and far-sighted as they were, and couched in language bold and perspicuous, produced a great effect on the more moderate of either party, and he was followed by several of the Presbyterians on the same side, and even by one or two of the milder officers; but the more zealous held to their opinions, and urged them with all their wonted force and ingenuity, and the debate waxed warm, a strong majority, however, leaning evidently toward the death of Charles and the abolition of the royal power in Great Britain.

It was, moreover, brought into debate, and discussed very earnestly, by what means, if it should be decided that Charles Stuart must die, his death should be effected. Some hesitated not to advocate his private taking off by poison or the dagger, so to avoid the scandal and the odium of his public execution; to whom the honest but fanatical and visionary Harrison replied in words of fire, repudiating the idea of such foul and midnight murder, and declaring that, as their cause was just, so should their vengeance be both bold and open. That, as his crimes were evident, so should their punishment be manifest and in the face of day!

"What," he exclaimed, with real eloquence, "shall we, the workers of the grandest revolution earth ever has beheld, the conscience-armed deliverers of England, the champions of a nation's freedom, the christian warriors of an all-seeing God, shall we take off our foe by ratsbane in the dark, or slay him with a hireling knife, for a mere paltry dread of what the world shall say? Not so! not so! but we will point the world's voice by our actions, fetter its opinion by our boldness! Let Charles, I say, let Charles THE KING be brought to trial in the presence of

his peers, THE PEOPLE! There, if he be found guilty, let him be led to execution in the world's eye and the sun's. Let him be slain as a deliberate and solemn sacrifice; offered as a high victim at the shrines of freedom and of God. With honor and respect to the great station he has held, but with implacable and stern resentment toward the crimes by which he has defiled it. As he hath done to others so let us do to him, not as vile stabbers and assassins, but as elected judges, acting for men below, and answerable to the Lord on high. Let *him* henceforth be an ensample unto those who would enslave their fellows. Let England be a precept to all nations, that, when oppressed, they shall arise in the unconquerable strength of purity, and honesty, and truth; that they shall battle boldly, and unto success; that they shall judge impartially; and execute inflexibly the high decrees of justice and of vengeance!"

Throughout this stirring scene, to Edgar's great astonishment, Cromwell took no share in the argument, nor did he even seem to pay the grave attention which the subject merited to the opinions of the speakers. Much of the time he was engaged in whispering, and even jesting, with those who sat beside him; and once or twice indulged in those rude ebullitions of practical humor which had made him such a favorite in the camp, but which were most unsuitable and unbecoming in a grave and sorrowful debate, involving, it might be, the life and death of thousands, the fate of a most ancient line of kings, the future government of a great and glorious empire. Not a little astonished and disgusted at this conduct, Sir Edgar watched him closely, to detect, if possible, the causes of his mood and the internal workings of his mind; but, after a long survey, being still in doubt whether he had brought to the council a mind predetermined and unalterably fixed, or whether he had put on levity of manner to conceal irresolution and a perturbed spirit, he called openly on Cromwell to give his opinion.

"Verily," answered he, "verily I am yet unresolved. Have at thee, Ludlow!" he continued, springing to his feet, with a loud boisterous laugh, and hurling at the head of the republican a cushion of the sofa on which he was

sitting, with such violence as almost to overturn him, upsetting at the same time several candles, and throwing the whole council into confusion, under cover of which he ran out of the room, and was already half way down the stairs, when Ludlow, who had pursued him, struck him between the shoulders with the same missile, and drove him headforemost down the flight of steps and through the door, which had been opened by a servant in expectation of his exit.

Thus ended the discussion and the council for that evening; but, within a week, the House of Commons appointed a committee "to prepare a charge of high treason against the king, which should contain the several crimes and misdemeanors of his reign; which, being made, they would consider the best way and manner of proceeding that he might be brought to justice." About the same time some idle intercessions, at the request of the prince, were made in the behalf of Charles by the states-general of Holland, and a letter yet more idle sent by the queen to be delivered to the parliament. In a short time the charge of the committee was prepared and approved by the commons. The House of Lords, indeed, rejected it; and, instantly adjourning for a week, on their return found their doors locked by orders of the lower house, and, being thus excluded, sat no more for many years.

Then a high court of justice was appointed, of the most celebrated and influential men, civil and military, in the realm. Bradshaw, a lawyer of great talent and inflexible boldness, was named lord-president, invested with much state, and had lodgings suitable to his high office assigned to him at Westminster. The royal prisoner was brought up from Hurst to Windsor under a powerful guard of Harrison's command, and thence to his own palace at St. James, where he was held in rigorous custody, while every preparation was made for the accomplishment of that great tragedy, with the report of which "Europe was soon to ring from side to side."

CHAPTER VI.

A KING BEFORE HIS PEOPLE.

"*Mal.* If such a one be fit to govern, speak;
* * * *
Mac. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. Oh nation miserable!"

MACBETH.

THE day at length arrived, big with the fate of England and her king — the twentieth of January, memorable thenceforth through every age for the most solemn and sublimely daring measure recorded in the annals of the world.

At an extremely early hour the members of the high court of justice, which had been constituted with the utmost labor by the military council that swayed the helm of state, so as to be a fair representation of all ranks and classes of society, assembled in the painted chamber. All the chief members of the Independent party in the commons, Lord Fairfax, Cromwell, Skippon, Ireton, as the four generals, with all the colonels of the army, the two chief justices and the chief baron, six peers, five aldermen of London, several from the most leading barristers, and many baronets and country gentlemen of note, had been at the first summoned to the discharge of this unprecedented trust; but, when the House of Lords refused its sanction to the ordinance for bringing of the king to justice, the peers and judges were omitted. Sir Harry Vane, Algernon Sidney, St. John, and some other stanch republicans, who, although friendly to the king's deposition, were not consenting to his death, refused to sit as members of the court; and many more, either from fear or conscience, failed answering to their names.

While the commissioners were here assembled, Arden among the rest, news was brought to them on a sudden that his majesty had landed at Sir Robert Cotton's stairs, on which Cromwell, who had been previously conversing with sundry of his intimates among the judges, with the same air of jocularity which had so strongly marked his

conduct during the earlier consultation, rose suddenly from the place where he had been sitting, and moved with rapid but unequal steps toward the window.

The keen eye of Sir Edgar followed him, and, to his no small wonder, he perceived that the hands, which the daring chieftain laid upon the wainscot to support him, as he leaned his body forward to look upon the royal captive, quivered so violently as almost to communicate a tremor to his frame; and, when he turned away, after a long and anxious gaze upon the destined victim, although his eye was steady and unblenching, and his mouth firmly compressed and calm, his whole face, usually so rubicund and sanguine in its coloring, was ghastly pale, and his lips white as ashes.

Marvelling greatly at this change in one so stern and inaccessible to ordinary feelings; remembering, too, the widely different glance with which, at a more early period of his great career, the eye of Cromwell had completely quelled the proud man at whose aspect he now faltered; and wishing to investigate the state of mind which caused so strange a revelation of contending passions, Sir Edgar was just stepping forward to address him, when the doors were thrown wide open, and the judges summoned to the court.

Westminster Hall, that most sublime and ancient specimen of architecture, brought to perfection, which modern art has vainly sought to imitate, by those whom, in our overweening vanity, we children of a later day presume to style barbarians, had been prepared, with singular attention to details, for this most dread solemnity. Benches, row above row, covered with crimson velvet for the commissioners, filled all the upper end; Bradshaw, the learned and undaunted president, sat in the centre of the front rank on a splendid chair, attired in rich dark-colored robes, and supported on the right hand and the left by his assessors, Say and Lisle, with a long table similarly decked before them. The galleries were crowded almost to suffocation by spectators pale with excitement and anxiety, while the whole body of the building was filled by an enormous multitude upon the right, and by a regiment of musketeers upon the left, in caps of steel and polished

corslets, with their pieces loaded and their ready matches lighted, a narrow passage being marked out with silken cords between the soldiery and populace, affording a free passage from the doorway to the bar. The judges entered in the midst of a silence so stern and deep, that the slight rustling of their mantles and their feet on the thick carpets, which were strewn within the bar, was clearly audible. Solemn, severe, and sad, they took their seats, each man of them, as it appeared, almost oppressed by the intense feeling of the vast responsibility which had been laid upon him, and each determined to acquit himself as became one called to act, as it were, before the real and imbodied presence of his country and his God.

As Arden looked around him, he felt the blood thrill painfully in every pore of his own frame! He saw that the same process was at work in all around him. Never had he beheld so pale a concourse. Yet, amid all that colorless and ashy pallor, there was no sign of trepidation or dismay; it was the outward aspect of a mind within so rigidly and painfully resolved, that it had gathered all the blood toward its citadel the heart, not the weak failing of the flesh through doubt or terror. Scarce had their seats been taken ere the doors of that great hall were opened, and a sedan chair, preceded and surrounded by a guard of carbineers, was carried to the bar, where a large chair of velvet was set forth for the king's accommodation. There was a pause of intense interest as the prisoner stepped out. It seemed as if the heart of each man in that huge apartment had ceased from its pulsations; not a hand moved, not a breath was drawn. It was, however, but for a moment; for the king instantly came forth, dressed in his usual garb of sable silk, decked only by the star and garter, and wearing on his head his high-crowned hat, which he did not remove, when, after a stern and haughty look of mingled pride and sadness on the assembled court, he calmly took the seat prepared for his reception. Nor did he then, by any glance or sign of courtesy, acknowledge or show any reverence to the court; but, after sitting still for a few minutes' space, arose again, and, having turned completely round with his back toward the judges, gazed steadfastly down the

long area of the hall with the same severe aspect as before, until the crier of the court began to read the ordinance of parliament, commanding his arraignment, in a sharp ringing voice, which filled the whole apartment with its distinct and high-pitched tones. Then he again sat down, with his eyes fixed immovably on the commanding and undaunted features of the president. The parliament's commission ended, the names of all the judges were called over, and, first, that of the president, who answered in a clear voice, quiet and unmoved by any tremor. Then the lord-general was summoned, and straight there was a pause of unexpected silence, for no one answered.

Again the crier's accents wakened the echoes of the hall — "Lord Fairfax!" — and this second time a shrill voice, though musical and soft, replied. "He has more wit," it said, "than to be present here!"

The court rose in confusion—there was a momentary tumult, and a clamor of stern import both from the judges and spectators; but Bradshaw's high notes, pealing like a silver trumpet's above the din of tongues, enforced tranquillity, and, calling on the officers to seize the person who had dared contemn the court, appeased the short-lived riot. But when, after a hasty search, no one could be discovered, the calling of the commissioners proceeded, until nearly eighty had answered to their names.

Then, with an air of deep religious feeling, mixed with the consciousness of high authority, engraved on his strong features, marked, as they were, by lines of wearing thought, and pale from studious vigils over the midnight lamp, Bradshaw arose; and his voice, though it faltered not, was subdued almost unto tenderness as he addressed the royal culprit.

"Charles Stuart, king of England, the commons of England, being deeply sensible of the calamities that have been brought upon this nation, which are fixed upon you as the principal author of them, have resolved to make inquisition for blood; and, according to that debt and duty which they owe to justice, to God, to the kingdom, and themselves, they have resolved to bring you to trial and to judgment; and for that purpose have constituted

the high court of justice before which you are now brought."

This said, Cook, the attorney of the commonwealth, who sat close to the person of the prisoner, rose to address the court; but the king, having in his hand a staff of ebony, tipped with a little head of silver, laid it upon his shoulder, and, in the deep tones of authority, commanded him to "Hold!" which word he still reiterated with warmth, that might almost have been termed violence, when he perceived that he was disobeyed at the lord-president's command.

"My lord," the attorney said, "I come here to charge Charles Stuart, the king of England, in the name of the commons of England, with treason and high misdemeanor. I desire that the said charge may be read!" And the lord-president giving direction to the clerk to read the charge, the king, in a yet louder and more angry voice, cried "Hold;" but Bradshaw, his large black eyes flashing with indignation, sternly forbade the clerk to notice the rude interruptions of the prisoner at the bar, but to get on to his duty; and the indictment was read instantly, containing, in effect, "that he had been admitted King of England, and trusted with a limited power to govern according to law; and, by his oath and office, was obliged to use the power committed to him for the good and benefit of the people; but that he had, out of a wicked design to erect to himself an unlimited and tyrannical power, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people, traitorously levied war against the present parliament and the people therein represented."

It then enumerated the calamities which had befallen England, the free and noble blood which had been shed like water, the devastation of the fair face of the land, the sacking of its rich and thriving cities, the slaughter of its bravest sons. It pointed to the causes, the commissions signed by his own hand for levying this domestic war, the raising of his standard in the town of Nottingham, his presence at Edgehill, and other battles fought under his eye and at his instigation, so many flagrant proofs that "he had been the author and contriver of these unnatural, cruel, and bloody wars; and was therein guilty of all the

treasons, murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolations, damages, and mischiefs to the nation which had been committed in the said wars, or had been thereby occasioned; and that he was, therefore, now impeached for the said crimes and treasons, on the behalf and in the name of all the good people of England—"

As the clerk read these words, while all the vast assemblage was hushed in the deep silence of attention and excitement, the same shrill voice which had before proclaimed the absence of the Lord-general Fairfax again exclaimed, in tones so thrilling that they penetrated every portion of the building—"No! nor one hundreth part of them."

The tumult which ensued was yet more wild and more alarming than before; the whole crowd sprang to their feet with a hoarse savage murmur, and a rush and a rustling of their feet and garments that might be heard to a considerable distance. One officer, a grim hard-featured fanatic, leaped forward from the ranks, and pointing with his sheathed rapier to that division of the galleries whence the disturbance had proceeded, furiously shouted to his men, bidding them "Level their muskets and give fire!" A fearful scene ensued. The heavy rattling of the matchlocks, as they were thrown forward, ready for instant use, by the fierce soldiery, was almost drowned by the cries, shrieks, and exclamations of the spectators, many of whom were females, all now in mortal terror at the prospect of receiving an immediate volley, rushing in all directions to and fro, and some of them endeavoring to drop down into the body of the hall.

Before, however, time was given for the men to fire, it was announced to the lord-president that the disturber of the court was, in truth, no other or less personage than the Lady Fairfax, who had taken this extraordinary mode of testifying her dislike to the proceedings, and had been now persuaded to withdraw. On this announcement silence and peace were once again restored; and after a few moments the clerk went on with the arraignment, repeating the offensive words more loudly than before—"On the behalf and in the name of all the good people of England, as a tyrant, traitor, and murderer—and an im-

placable and public enemy to the commonwealth of England."

Then, with remarkable and singular ill-taste, and as ill-judgment, Charles, who had been continually gazing about the court in different directions, as if entirely free from interest of any sort in the proceedings; now lowering on the judges with cool, contemptuous haughtiness; now glaring with an eye of bitter hatred on the dark soldiery who kept the avenues; now gazing with an air of sad, reproachful gravity, not all unblent with pity, on the bulk of the spectators; actually burst out into a loud and ringing laugh as the word traitor was pronounced.

Bradshaw again arose majestically firm and steady, though evidently moved to anger by the open and undisguised contempt of Charles, and with strong emphasis, and evident determination to check this disrespectful levity on the king's part, though not without consideration for the high place and natural displeasure of the prisoner at the proceedings of the court, rebuked him for the tone and air he had adopted, a tone and air becoming neither his own dignity, his position at the present moment, nor the exalted duties and great power of the court, before whom he stood arraigned.

With the same air of unconcealed contempt which he had hitherto displayed, Charles listened to the president's address, and answered by a denial of the existence of any authority whatever in the court; of any right pertaining unto them or unto the English people to hold their king to trial; or of any legal power at all vested in those before whom he now stood.

Little occurred worthy of farther note during the three days of this singular and all-important ceremonial. The king, persisting in denial of the court's authority, refusing to plead to the indictment under which he stood arraigned, and constantly breaking in with frivolous and uncivil interruptions upon the business and proceedings of the trial, was, at the end of the first day, remanded, and the commissioners adjourned to the ensuing Monday, the twenty-second instant.

Upon this second day the prisoner's behavior was the same; and, after some considerable altercation, he was

again remanded, and led back under close custody to Sir Robert Cotton's house, where lodgings were assigned to him during the hearing of his cause.

Again, on the next day, the twenty-third, the court resumed, and, on the king's appearance at the bar, the commonwealth's attorney instantly craved judgment on him as contumacious; saying that the innocent blood shed by him cried aloud for justice. For the last time the prisoner was commanded by the president to plead, and warned that, by persisting in his present course, he would but draw upon him an immediate judgment; but Charles again refused to offer any answer or defense, crying out that he "valued not the charge a rush"—that he "would not violate the trust his people had reposed in him, by owning a new court of judicature"—that "it was for their liberty he stood; and, but for this, he would not here object to giving satisfaction to the English people of the clearness of his past proceedings."

The clerk accordingly was ordered to record the prisoner's default; and the court once again adjourned until the twenty-seventh, sitting throughout the interval caused by the king's determination in the painted chamber daily, and hearing witnesses to the fact of his setting up the standard of his cause at Nottingham; the leading of his troops in armor at Edgehill, Newbury, and Naseby; the issuing of mandates and commissions to his officers for prosecution of the war; and seeking to establish proofs with which they judged it needful to hold themselves provided, in case of the king's choosing at the last to plead.

After this pause they met as previously, upon the twenty-seventh, in the great hall at Westminster, and the cause was once more resumed; but still the king refused to answer or submit; and then the president informed him that the court had considered and agreed upon a judgment, but yet, if he had anything to say in defense of himself in respect to the matter charged, they were prepared to hear him. In reply, Charles demanded to be heard before both houses of the parliament, assembled in the painted chamber, before the passing of the sentence. This, after an adjournment of the court for half an hour to consider on the king's proposition, was refused, as be-

ing, in effect, but a new denial of their jurisdiction as now constituted, and a fresh contempt.

On the return of the commissioners he was at once informed that he had all too long delayed the court already by his contempt and contumacy, and that they were resolved unanimously to proceed to judgment and to punishment. Then, in a long speech, eloquent and lucid, and replete with arguments which might appear most fitting to excuse and justify such a proceeding, and to convince the world of the right *moral* justice of a measure not certainly in strict conformity with *legal* precedents, Bradshaw proceeded to pass sentence on the prisoner—and, toward the end of his oration, urged on the king the scriptural example of David's late repentance for his imitation.

Unmoved and haughty, with his dark features marked by no expression save a slight scornful sneer, Charles rose, still covered, and strove once again to interrupt him—demanding to be heard concerning those great imputations thus laid to his charge, but was again reminded that he had refused to own the court, and that too much delay and liberty had been already granted to him.

The sentence was then read—the president affirming it to be "the sentence, judgment, and resolution of the whole court," and all the members standing up to testify their full concurrence with their speaker. For the last time the royal culprit claimed to be heard; but, at the president's direction, the guards withdrew him, still exclaiming loudly—"that, since he was not suffered for to speak, he might expect what sort of justice other men should have of them!"

Various and wild were the expressions of disgust and approbation among the multitude; some cried "God save the king!" despite the angry scowls and bitter menaces of the fanatical and furious guards; others, and far the more in numbers, shouted, with inflamed visages and bitter tones, "Justice!" and "Vengeance!" and "Away with him!"—and one, more brutal than the rest, offered to strike him with his hand as he was led forth from the hall, and actually spat upon his beard!

The court rose; the members dispersed to their homes; the most unprecedented, singular, and solemn trial on rec-

ord in the annals of the universe was ended; a trial, wherein a puissant nation was the plaintiff; a king, the son and grandson of a long line of mighty and hereditary monarchs, the defendant, and the point at issue, the momentous question whether the kings of England should be despots over cringing and soul-shackled slaves, or the first magistrates of an enlightened, wise, and free, and potent people.

Happily for England! happily for the world! the judges of that wondrous court were equal to the task. Their verdict was the fiat of their country's freedom—rational, moderate, and stable. And to the world that verdict set forth an example that has been followed, far and near, to the establishment of liberty, and happiness, and even-handed justice, in regions then obscured by the thick night of tyranny and ignorance.

By his blood Charles Stuart sealed the charter of England's constitution; and, though for a short time the people lapsed again beneath a sway as absolute as his, it was but for a time. And the seeds sown in that first revolution, moistened with noble blood, and matured by the stormy breath of war, though they lay dormant for a space, were not extinct, but grew up to a fair and fertile crop, and so have flourished since—and may they flourish so forever.

It may be that the death of Charles was a great legal wrong. It may be that among his judges many were actuated by insane and senseless feelings of overstrained religion; that many were urged on by personal resentments—personal hopes and fears—personal pride—and personal ambition. But, not the less for these things, it must be confessed that it was a GREAT MORAL RIGHT.

If Charles deserved to live, no tyrant ever merited to die. If Charles *had* lived, England had never been, what she now is, THE FREE. Nor would another land, the giant offspring of an immortal mother, have carried those same principles, for which her parent bled before her, into effect over a space a thousand times more mighty. The good traits of *the man*—such as they were, feeble and faintly marked, and showing rather the absence of active vice than the existence of distinguishing and vivid

virtue—must neither hide nor palliate the evil actions and worse motives of *the king*. That it was his design to do away, so far as in him lay, with England's constitution; to reign uncurbed by parliaments—the only salutary check on regal sway—to wield the boundless power of the nation's sword, and grasp with the same hand the vast resources of the nation's purse; to mould the church into an instrument and weapon of his despotic government; to reign, in short, an absolute and autocratic sovereign, none can at this time doubt, unless they willfully seal up their minds against the truth.

In desperate diseases, means that at other times were desperate and deadly must be applied to cure; and it may be asserted, without much danger of disproof, that, by the death of Charles, and by that *only*, could the great principles of that immortal struggle have been wrought out to their fulfillment. It was twice needful. Needful, that it might hold up a terrible and salutary dread to future tyrants—that it might tear the roots of despotism from the soil which they would have rendered sterile—and doubly needful, that, by conducting England through the fearful ordeal of democratic anarchy, it might infuse a yet more salutary dread into the people, of liberty unregulated and immoderate—licentiousness, not freedom.

These were, in part, the thoughts of Arden as he subscribed his name to that strange instrument which, next to Magna Charta, may be looked upon in its results as the chief cause of England's present greatness. Under her previous sovereigns, ambitious, great, and wise as many of them doubtless were, England was but, at best, a secondary power. Under her greatest usurper she blazed forth, on the instant, into a star of almost solar magnitude; and, but for that death-warrant, the navigation act had never given her dominion over the boundless seas, nor made her, as the great commercial nation, one of the mightest springs and movers of the universe.

What were the real motives of that man, who, if he did not absolutely bring about, might, beyond question, absolutely have prevented, the execution of the king, no human understanding may divine. But the great proba-

bility is, that, like most human motives, they were of mingled strain—half fire and half clay.

Sir Edgar, in the course of the proceedings, had been convinced, to his full satisfaction, that the mind of Oliver was strangely and unnaturally overwrought. His coarse and vulgar jocularity at Ludlow's house; his paleness and unwonted trepidation on the king's first appearance; the little share he took in any portion of the trial, for, except one outbreaking of fierce temper when Mr. Downes, during the last adjournment, most pathetically urged the members to grant his majesty's demand of a joint conference of the three estates, he had scarce taken any interest in what was going forward; and, above all, his brutal and half-frantic jests during the same adjournment, when he daubed Henry Martin's face with ink, and jeered and laughed so as to move the wonder of all present; all these things, taken in connection with the state in which he found him when he visited his chamber to beseech him to interfere on the side of mercy after the sentence had been passed, proved to Arden, beyond all doubt, that he was awfully perturbed in spirit.

It was late in the evening of the day following the trial that Sir Edgar, who, though he had concurred in the sentence, wished its mitigation, sought Cromwell's lodging at Whitehall, nor was it without some urgency that he compelled the soldiers and domestics to admit him. The fortunate commander was already in possession of the superb apartments which had so lately called his fallen rival master. In the first antechamber of that gorgeous suite, two privates of the ironsides were sitting by a blazing fire, its bright light flashing from their steel armor and accoutrements in strong and painful contrast to the luxurious decorations and appliances of royal ease among which they were seated.

The second and third rooms of the suite were vacant, although dazzlingly illuminated by many waxen lights; but, long before he reached the door of the last room, Arden's attention was aroused by the deep groans, mingled with broken exclamations—snatches of fervent but disjointed prayer, and bursts of passionate and painful weeping, which fell upon his ear as he advanced. He

rapped against the panel, but his signal was unheard, or, at the least, unheeded; though the sounds which first struck his ear, had now ceased, saving only the sullen echoes of heavy and irregular steps, distinctly audible even as they fell on the soft texture of the three-plied Persian carpets.

Scrupulous though he was, and jealous almost to excess of undue familiarity, Sir Edgar was too much excited now to stand on points of form. He turned the gilded handle, and almost noiselessly the door revolved upon its hinges; and, in one of his darkest moods, hypochondriac or conscience-stricken, that wonderful man stood before him. The large apartment sumptuously decked with furniture and hangings of splendid crimson velvet, the toilet-table with its appurtenances of transparent crystal and plate of solid gold, the royal arms of England embroidered on the tester of the bed, piled high with coverlets of down and satin, passed scarcely seen before the eyes of the spectator engrossed in observation of the strange being who now tenanted the halls of England's sovereign. A single light, and that obscure and waning, stood on a central table made of some rich eastern wood; and on the hearth a few decaying brands, which had been suffered to burn low, smouldered with more of smoke than flame, casting a sickly and unnatural light about the chamber.

But HE—the tenant—with blood-shot eyes, and features ghastly wan and haggard—he strode to and fro with steps irregular and almost staggering, now waving his extended arm on high, now striking it upon his broad breast with a violence denoted plainly by the heavy and dull sound of the oft-repeated blows. Tears, copious and agonizing tears, those which console not nor relieve, but burn like vengeful fires, flowed down his hollow cheeks; and his words, wild as his gait and gestures, were now of bitter self-reproach, of accusation, and remorse, now of sincere and humble penitence, and now of fierce ecstatic triumph. But, in an instant, in the twinkling of the eye, as he perceived that he was not alone, his air and aspect were, as if by magic transformation, utterly changed and calm.

"Ha! good Sir Edgar," he exclaimed, "this is a pleas-

are such as I have not long experienced; nor, though such friendly visitations were once ordinary things between us, of late days expected!"

"I have called on you," Arden gravely replied, "I have called on you now, lieutenant-general, not for mere ordinary reasons, whether of friendship or of ceremonial, but upon matters of great weight and interest to England. To come to the point at once, I have called here believing, and hoping likewise, that I shall find in you a real and unselfish patriot; one that regards not self-aggrandizement, or fame, or wealth, or power, when compared to his country's weal. In this hope, this belief, I have come to implore you, as a friend and faithful counsellor, that you will interpose your powerful influence to shield this most unhappy king from death. Justice required that he should be condemned—justice is satisfied. The great example is set forth to England and the universe. All ends are answered that his execution can attain. And you, sir, who have won the highest crown of warlike honor that has been witnessed in these latter days, beware. Beware, I say, lest present times, ay! and posterity to boot, shall deem that, in permitting Charles to perish by the headman's axe, you have looked rather to your own than to your country's interests. Kill him—for in neglecting to preserve, you actually kill no less than if alone, and by a single mandate, you condemned him—kill him, and it may well be you shall reign yourself as monarch over England. But, to gain a precarious, short-lived, and unhappy eminence, you shall lose present peace and future glory. You shall cast from you the esteem and love of those who *have* bled and *would* die for you. You shall stand high in solitary friendless state, without the single consolation of a self-approving spirit. Spare him, save him; and you shall be the first forever in the heart and judgment of every honest Briton. While England's name exists, yours shall live in coeval glory, the title of the loftiest worth, the purest patriotism, the most disinterested clemency that earth has witnessed, since her young surface bore the steps of giants and of angels!"

"Nay! you wax warm in eloquence!" Oliver answered, coldly. "Surely your zeal doth eat you up! yea, the

desire of your heart doth rise up to your brain, and cloud its better reason. I would—ay, of a surety I do profess to you—I would lay down not merely the poor honor—that vainest and most fickle breath of human fantasy—which you ascribe to me, to whom it is not due, but to the Lord of Hosts—but my life even—my existence upon earth—my hope of seeing England the freest and the first of European princedoms—that so this bruised and bending reed might not be trodden in the mire—this frail and half-cracked potsherd might not be shivered into atoms. 'But, when the Lord hath spoken, what mortal shall gainsay him?' Was it not borne into our hearts, branded with characters of living fire upon the inmost tablets of our souls, 'Ye shall avenge my people. For their blood and their children's blood, which he hath spilled upon the ground that hath not drunk it up, calleth aloud for vengeance. Yea! ye shall slay the king.' Is it not written that 'Ye shall not suffer one of them to live!' and what are we that we should contradict Jehovah? I could not if I would—I could not if I would—and that I would do so, as the game stands, I say not—now save Charles Stuart from the infliction of that righteous sentence which you have aided to pass on him. The people have arisen in their might; the people's voice hath gone forth to the utmost portions of the world, 'The king shall surely die!' the people's voice is God's voice! Hear it and tremble—hear it and obey!"

At once the latest hope of Edgar vanished; the firm determination, evinced not by words only, but by the cold hard eye, the compressed lip, the clinched hand, and the hard-set teeth, through which the low stern voice was sent out in a harsh and hissing whisper, proved to him so distinctly as to banish even hope, that Charles had not a possibility, much less a chance, of life at Cromwell's intercession. And from the lip of Cromwell only could any intercession come that should prevail over the angry prejudices and morose fanaticism of the army.

Seeing the fruitlessness of effort, he desisted. With a sick heart and boding spirit he departed from the presence of the arbiter, whom even now he knew not

whether to think an over-zealous patriot, or an ambitious, hypocritical adventurer, playing a deep game for a mighty venture; and strode away to find in his lone lodging a sleepless bed disturbed by ominous and sad presagings, by doubts, by sorrow, by remorse. For he already had begun bitterly to repent the part which he had borne in the great revolution now about to terminate so tragically for the ruler—so disastrously, as his fears told him, for the ruled—and, above all, so fatally for England's permanent and real peace.

Scarcely had Edgar gone from Cromwell's presence, before a new petitioner arrived, and with yet more of difficulty than the former had experienced, gained access to the presence of his kinsman. For that petitioner was no other than his cousin, Colonel John Cromwell, an officer of the Dutch service, and commissioned as his agent with the parliament by the Prince of Wales, who at this time resided at the Hague. In the commencement of the interview the able and accomplished soldier confined himself to solemn and ceremonious remonstrances against the act in contemplation; assuring his great relative of the resentment, horror, and disgust which this atrocious crime—for so he hesitated not to call it—would kindle throughout every christian land; would kindle, not against England, nor the parliament, nor army; but against him alone, who, as the world well knew, could wind the reins of government just as he listed, pointing the councils of the one and wielding the war-weapons of the other.

"Tush! cousin," answered Oliver, "tell me not of atrocity and crime. 'Tis a great act of sovereign and solemn justice. But were it as you say, I have no power to alter it. It is the army, and not I, who *will* inflict this justice on the king, brooking not any let nor hindrance."

"Remember you not, sir," exclaimed the other, "how, some twelve months ago, you did profess to me, that 'rather would you draw your sword in the defense of Charles, than suffer these republicans to harm one hair upon his head.' Have you forgotten this and other such asseverations, or do you willfully and of aforethought violate your word?"

"Well, right well, I remember it!" Cromwell replied,

in tones of great asperity, "and well you do now to remind me of it; for so you remind me of *his* base and lying insincerity, that drove the faithful and brave army into such bitterness of wrath as not even I could stem, either by force or counsel. The times are changed—the times are changed, and strangely, since I spoke so to you—and on his own head be his blood. For by his own craft, his own ingrate and selfish subtlety, hath he dragged down on himself this ruin. If it be true, that whom the gods have destined to destruction they first deprive of reason, as the wise Ethnics did believe, then hath the Lord of Hosts hardened the heart of this man that he should die, not live!"

"You are determined, then, to do this deed of infamy and horror?" the foreign officer demanded.

"I am determined!" Oliver answered, sternly, "I am determined not to interfere with England's course of judgment. I have prayed for the king, and fasted! yea, I have striven with the Lord these many times that some way might be given me to save him—but no return hath he given me, nor any sign, nor answer."

Colonel Cromwell rose up from his seat, and walking with light steps toward the doorway, cautiously looked out, and satisfied himself that no one was within earshot; then turning the key with a wary hand, and dropping a strong night-latch, he returned, and drawing from his bosom an emblazoned parchment containing his credentials, a large sheet of vellum perfectly blank and vacant, but signed at length and sealed, in his own name and for his royal father, by Charles Stuart, prince of Wales and heir apparent, he laid them on the table under the eye of his bold kinsman.

"Cousin," he said, "it is no time to dally now with mere words in this matter. Look here at this carte blanche. It is in your sole power now to make—not yourself only, but your posterity, and family, and kindred happy, and great, and honorable, through all ages. Else, as they changed their names in bygone days from Williams unto Cromwell, so now must they be forced to change it once again; for this one fact will bring such infamy upon the name and the whole generation of them,

that no after ages will be able to wipe out the shameful stain."

The general's features worked convulsively, and his face flushed crimson, and paled, and flushed again, as he heard this address; and his hand dropped down to his dagger's hilt, and griped it with such force, that it seemed as if he would have buried his strong fingers in the ivory pommel; but, when his guest had ended, he answered in a quiet voice, though evidently guarded and constrained,

"You have done," he said, "you have done, sir, and I have heard you out. I have been hitherto calm—very calm," he continued, gradually warming as he spoke, into fierce ire; "I have endured to hear my motives questioned; my assertions doubted; and the great cause, of which I am a most unworthy, but a most sincere supporter, scoffed at and vilified, and held up as atrocious in the world's eye, infamous and shameful. Calmly I have endured all this—nay, I have heard my own good name traduced, my family dishonored, the name of Cromwell coupled—coupled, I say, as if synonymous—with villany and its reward—disgrace. Calmly I have endured this also! But you have dared to *bribe* me—presumed to fancy that you could buy me, not like a fettered captive in the body, but like a renegado and apostate in the chainless mind. You! you—a Cromwell—have ventured, face to face, to offer me the basest of affronts—to tender to me gold, and rank, and titles, to turn me from my righteous purpose—to seduce me from my conscience, my allegiance, and my honor. Thank God—thank God!—I say, thank God, if you believe in him—that I am regenerate, and you a Cromwell—for were *I* one jot more a sinner than I am, or *you* one tittle less connected with my blood, then had I sheathed this dagger"—and, as he spoke, he drew and dashed the weapon furiously upon the ground before his feet—"dungeon-deep into your heart. Begone! you have your answer."

Truly had Oliver said that the tempter was of his own blood; for he rose firmly from his chair, and with an erect and unflinching carriage, looked full in his enraged kinsman's eye till he ceased speaking; and then—"Tush! cousin Oliver," he said, "I care not for your vagaries of

passion—I am a soldier, man, and not a woman or a child, that words can daunt me. But now you are distempered—think of this matter deeply; weigh it and ponder on it ere you answer. I shall await, at my inn, your reply until to-morrow morning. Give you good night and better temper."

And he withdrew, believing in his heart that Oliver's rage was but assumed, and that the golden bait would take. But sadly was he destined to be deceived; for, at about an hour after midnight, a messenger came to him from Whitehall, and told him he might now go to bed, for he must not expect any more answer, than he had, unto the prince; for that the council of the officers had again been seeking God, and there was no hope for it, but the king must die.

Accordingly, upon the following morning, the celebrated twenty-ninth of January, Charles, after a mournful parting with his children, was led through the palace garden and park of St. James to his own chamber at Whitehall, where he prayed for a space with Bishop Juxon, who afterward accompanied him to the block; thence to the banqueting-hall, and thence, through a passage broken in the wall, unto the scaffold. There, after a short speech, which he concluded by declaring that he "had a good cause—he had a gracious God—and, therefore, he would say no more," he laid down his head on the block, and died, with such a perfect dignity, such a serene and modest fearlessness, unmixed with anything of boldness or parade, as to justify the observation, applied originally to another, that "no action of his life became him like the leaving of it."

CHAPTER VII.

A MIDNIGHT VISIT.

"Now there he lies,
With none so poor to do him reverence."
JULIUS CÆSAR.

"Tot populis terrisque superbum
Regnatorem Asiæ. Jacet ingens litore truncus
Avolsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus."
ÆNEID, II. 556.

MIDNIGHT was on the mighty city.

The happy sleep had swept away the cares of thousands in its still, death-like oblivion. The multitudes who had assembled to sate themselves with gazing on the sad yet exciting spectacle of the morning, wearied and worn out with the unnatural tension of their nerves during that day of horror, had passed away to seek a contrast in the repose of their domestic chambers.

The very guards were slumbering on their posts about the precincts of Whitehall, and not a sound or breath disturbed the silence of the night. Within the palace, in one of those sublime apartments which he had loved so well while living, upon a lofty bed, adorned with crimson curtains, and rich ostrich plumes, and the gold-blazoned arms of England, lay a plain oaken coffin, half-covered with a pall of sable velvet. Many tall waxen torches blazed around the room in candlesticks of solid silver, six feet at least in height, and their light glanced upon a narrow plate of silver decking the coffin's lid, whereon were these few words, "King Charles—1648."

No mourning crowds wept round the couch whereon the hapless prince slept that cold sleep that knows no earthly waking. No coroneted peers watched over the embalmed remains; no flippant pages hushed their accustomed merriment in reverence to the ashes of their master; no guard of honor, with trailed arms and downcast visages, stood sentinel without the door; but with their carabines loaded, sheathed in their buff coats and bright armor, two privates of the ironsides strode to and

fro, passing each other and repassing at brief intervals, the ringing of their heavy armor, and the loud sounds of their spurred and booted footfalls, awakening strange echoes in that apartment of the dead.

The night wore onward, and the stars began to wink in the cold skies, and the first coming of the morn was felt in the increasing chillness of the air. Hitherto the watch of those unusual mourners had been lonely and uninterrupted. The clock, however, was just striking three, and its loud cadences were vocal still through the long vacant halls and vast saloons of the deserted palace, when a remote and stealthy footstep broke upon the silence, which was succeeding fast to the loud chimes. The soldiers interchanged alarmed and jealous glances, blew their slow matches to a vivid flame, and, listening with wary ears and ready weapons, resumed their guarded walk. Nearer and nearer came the step, firm, regular and low, but evidently not desirous of avoiding observation. Now it was at the door. It paused, and bringing simultaneously their weapons to the level, the soldiers halted between the body and the door, and challenged loudly, "Stand, ho! the word. Stand or we shoot!"

"Justice and freedom!" answered a harsh and discordant voice; and, bearing in his right hand a small waxen taper, and in his left a staff of ebony, Oliver Cromwell entered. He was dressed plainly in a full suit of black cloth, with silken hose, and a loose cloak of broadcloth faced with velvet, a very light black-hilted rapier hanging from his girdle, in lieu of the long, heavy broadsword which he so rarely laid aside; his face was very pale, but perfectly composed and grave, with the mouth firmly closed, and the eyes shining with a steady and unaltered light.

"Good watch," he cried, as he came in, "you keep good watch. Cold work, I trow, and cheerless. What would ye say now to a flagon of October—hey! Stephenson, hey! Bowtell? So! so! ye are on duty, ye would say—well, interrupt me not for that—I will relieve ye for a brief space, but one at a time, one only! Stephenson, give me thy carabine and the match—and now get

thee down to the buttery; tarry not over half an hour, and return straightway to take bluff Bowtell's place."

The soldier grinned significantly, gave up his weapon to his officer, and walked off greatly pleased at this brief intermission of an unpleasant duty. Cromwell looked after him as he departed, and, when his footsteps had sunk into silence, depositing the carabine he had taken in a corner, he walked up slowly to the coffin with a strong, stately step and unmoved aspect.

"He hath not broken on thy watch, then?" he demanded, with a grim smile, but evidently speaking thoughtfully and with emotion, although wishing to conceal his feelings by an assumption of unfeeling merriment. "He hath not waked to scare ye?"

"Now may the Lord forbid!" returned the superstitious soldier, half alarmed at the words and manner of his officer. What mean you, worthy general?"

"Why, how now, simpleton?" Cromwell replied. You look, in truth, as if he had walked forth in his untimely cerements to affright you. But fear not, Bowtell, fear not. The king sleeps sound, and shall sleep, till the day when the great trumpet of Jehovah shall call him to a mightier judgment, and, it may well be, to a darker doom. Have they screwed down the coffin?" he continued; "I fain would look upon him?"

And he moved closer to the bed, and throwing back the pall of velvet, tried to raise the lid; but, though not permanently fastened down, it yet resisted the attempt, being held tightly by some two or three stout spikes. After a moment's pause, he thrust the ferrule of his staff into the chink, and made an effort thus to draw the nails out of their sockets; but they had been driven in too firmly, and the staff creaked as though it would have broken. "Lend me thy rapier," he exclaimed; "its steel hilt will have strength enough; and, with the word, he forced the pommel into the aperture between the lid and side, and leaning heavily upon the weapon as a lever, wrenched up the cover with an impetus so sudden, that the nails flew into the air, and struck against the canopy which overhung it. Then he stood fixed, and, for a short

time, speechless, regarding, with a disturbed and cloudy brow, the truncated body of his victim.

The body, which had been opened and embalmed, was swathed in bandages of linen drawn so tightly round the limbs, that, when the shroud was lifted, the perfect form and the development of all the muscles might be traced as plainly as while he was in life. The head, partially covered by an embroidered napkin bound about the brows, and a broad riband of white silk fastened beneath the chin, was in its proper place; but a small interval, that showed like a discolored streak of dingy red, marked its disseverment. The face was pale, but scarcely more so than its wont, and far less ashy in its hues than that of the undaunted warrior who leaned over it. The lips retained their usual and healthful color, with something of a smile still visible about them; the eyes were closed, but naturally, and as if in sleep; the nose preserved its wonted form, unsharpened as yet by the iron hand of death.

There was, indeed, no sign or symptom of a painful and untimely dissolution on those serene and comely lineaments; something there might be of a languor not characteristic of the living man, of a placidity and peace more deep than usual; but nothing which could have led any one to fancy that the thread of life had been snapped violently, for him who slumbered there so tranquilly, by the rude weapon of the executioner.

For a long time Cromwell spoke not a word; nor moved a limb; nor even winked an eyelid; steadfastly, solemnly gazing on the features of his fallen foe and rival.

"He sleeps indeed!—he sleeps, how peacefully and well. That eye shall flash no more with kingly pride; that lip be wreathed no more into the calm but haughty sneer. The busy brain, that plotted so much woe to England—the indomitable mind, that would not swerve one hair-breadth from its purpose, no, not to purchase life—are these—are these, too, in repose, like that cold, voiceless lip, that nerveless and inanimate right hand? Is that sleep dreamless? Doth the soul, plunged in a dark and senseless torpor, lie paralyzed and shorn of its pervading

vigor in the abyss of Hades? Or hath it but awakened from this trance, after the turmoil of mortality, to more complete perfection; to consciousness, and wisdom, and unchanged immortality? Dost thou know, thou cold form, dost thou know now who stands beside thee? He who continually strove against the tyranny thou wouldst have set up in the land. He who beat down thy banner in the field, and swept thy gallant cavaliers like dust before the whirlwind. He who brought down thy glory from the throne, and paved thy path to that still hostelry —the grave? Dost thou know this; and yet not start from out thy bloody cerements?

"I do but dream," he went on, after a moment's pause —"the king is nothing! a mere clod in the valley! 'Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee—Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee! How art thou fallen from heaven, oh Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down, which didst weaken the nations!' Thus was it written of a mightier one than thou—thus hath it been with thee! Thy place is empty upon earth; thy country no more knows thee! Verily thou art fallen asleep—asleep for many a thousand years, until thou shalt be summoned to make answer in the spirit for all thy deeds wrought in the flesh. Yet then, even then, wilt thou have nothing, fallen great one, nothing to witness against me. But for thine own self-will, thine own tyrannical and senseless folly, thine own oppressing of the saints, and trampling under foot the delicate and tender consciences of men, nay! more than all this, but for thine own false-dealing and foul treachery toward those who would have served thee truly, thou mightst have still sat in the high place of thy forefathers. Thou mightst have outshone them, so far as the sovereign of a free and mighty nation outshines the chieftain of an enslaved and paltry tribe. Thou mightst have been

served by hands and swords, through the Lord's help, invincible, honored, and loved by hearts loyal, sincere, and single-minded. Thou mightst have fulfilled the number of thy days, dying in green old age amid the tears and lamentations of thy people, and bequeathing to thy sons that puissant and time-honored sceptre which now shall never more be wielded by thy race.

"Alas! alas! for man! Who that looked on thee in thy fair and princely youth would have presaged so sad an end to thy bright-seeming fortunes? Surely this frame of thine, which mine own eyes have seen so proud-enthroned upon thy charger's back, rallying thy followers through the havoc and the terror of the battle—surely this frame of thine, so strongly knit, and muscular, and manly, was formed to battle hardships and to brave long years! Surely, but for thine own insane and selfish folly, thou wast formed to die old!

"Lo!" and, as he thus spoke, he laid the finger of his right hand in the gaping wound, and with cool scrutiny examined the consistency and texture of the muscles, "lo! how sound is this flesh, how wiry and elastic, these dissevered sinews. There is no symptom here of disease or debility—no decay—no corruption of the system. But for the axe, he had lived years—ay! many and long years. But, verily, all things are of the Lord—and had He not predestined him to die, then had he hardened not his heart, nor raised up foes against him, of whom it is a scripture that 'none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.' Whom the Lord listeth to destroy, surely he striveth but in vain; for who shall find strength in the sword, or refuge in the speed of horses, against the Lord of Hosts? Then say not that I slew thee, but the Lord—for how had I defended thee against the God of Battles—or how had I acquitted whom He had judged to destroy?"

He paused from the long, wild declamation which he had poured out in the perturbation of his spirit, half-conscious, and, perhaps, half self-convicted of criminal ambition, and struggling to convince himself entirely of the

truth of the dark creed he had adopted; and thus to satisfy his restless spirit by a half voluntary self-deception.

The sentinel, meantime, had stood beside him, with his hand still outstretched as when he first extended it to receive again his sword, gazing partly in admiration, partly in fear and awe, now on the calm and rigid countenance of the dead king, now on the varying and agitated features of his remorseful judge, but less astonished at the scene than would have been expected, in consequence of the prevailing custom of his party to pray and preach, with every species of whining cant or furious raving, on all occasions anywise uncommon or surprising.

For several minutes' space Oliver gazed again in silence on the body, and then replacing the lid gently and almost tenderly—"Farewell," he said, "farewell on earth forever. Strangely have we been linked together here below, and wonderfully do we part. Hadst thou prevailed, my fate had been more bitter. Farewell! farewell! we meet no more, whether for good or evil, until that final meeting when God must judge between us two. Till then, sleep soundly; and then awake—HE only knows, to what!"

He then replaced the screws, and threw the pall across the coffin as before, the soldier Bowtell holding a torch, which he had taken from the nearest candelabrum, to assist him; this finished, he withdrew a pace or two, wrapped his cloak closely round him, and sat down upon a settle near the bed. The soldier, having replaced the light, stood for a little time in silence, and then said—"I pray you tell me now, lieutenant-general, what mode of government shall we now have?"

"The same as then was," he answered, in a sharp, decisive tone; and instantly relapsing into silence, sat in deep, sullen thought, until the other soldier came back from the buttery; when forgetting or disregarding his first promise of relieving Bowtell in his turn, he took up the small taper he had brought with him, and left the room in his dark mood, speaking no word to either of the sentinels.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST TRIAL.

"To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
With an unslipping knot, take Antony
Octavia to his wife. * * *
* * * By this marriage
All little jealousies, which now seem great,
And all great fears, which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing."

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

SOME months had passed after the death of Charles, during which a new form of government had been established. By a vote of the commons the existence of the upper house was declared dangerous and useless, and, without more ado, it was abolished. About the same time, by another vote, monarchy was extinguished, and it was made high treason to proclaim, or otherwise acknowledge Charles Stuart, commonly called the Prince of Wales, as king of England. A council of state had been next composed, of forty-one members—among whom were Fairfax, Cromwell, Bradshaw, with St. John and the younger Vane—on whom devolved the duties of the executive, with a proviso that they should resign their powers to the state as soon as the republic should be settled on a permanent and stable basis.

Some disaffection of the army, and tumults which, for a short time, threatened to be dangerous to the new government, were put down and punished rigorously by the zeal and energy of Cromwell, and all domestic matters wore now a show of happier and fairer promise than Arden had ever hoped to witness; while the republic had already been acknowledged, and received the greetings of many, the most powerful potentates of Europe.

Spring had grown into early summer; but, while all things around him gradually wore a fuller and more perfect beauty, while buds expanded into full-blown blossoms, and woods put on their freshest garniture of green, and the rich fields gladdened the farmer's heart by their

broad promise, the hopes of Arden had been blighted more and more, had faded into sorrows, had been seared and dried up into absolute despair.

A very few days after the king's execution, he had been summoned to repair with speed to Woodleigh, where Sibyl, his beloved, his last and only link to the cold world, was dangerously, if not desperately ill. He found her, as his crushed heart too truly had presaged, already dying. He watched beside her couch, and day by day marked the successive inroads of disease on that dear form. He saw her hourly growing weaker, paler, and less earthly in her mortal frame; and hourly, as he thought, more heavenly, more angelic in her mind.

Between them there was now no estrangement, no distrust. Death, which to ordinary spirits is a separation—death was to them a bond of union. Disguise was at an end; both felt, both knew, and both acknowledged that "some wintry blight," indeed, some "casual indisposition," was the immediate cause of her decline, yet that a pined and broken heart had snapped the corporeal energies, and betrayed the fortress to the insidious spoiler. Sorrow, regret, deep mourning, cast their dark shadows over them, but remorse came not near them; nor reproach; nor any bitter feeling except the sickening sense of hope deferred.

Sad though it was, and pitiful, it was a lovely scene—that death-bed—the bold and fearless soldier, unmanned utterly, and sobbing like a weak boy over the wreck of her whom he felt that he now loved better when stricken, blighted, and cut off already from communion with the sons of men, than when she was the pride and admiration of all who chanced to meet her. It has been said already that there was no disguise between them; and now, when every possibility of selfish motives was removed; when there could be no more the slightest misconstruction; when all asperities were, in truth, softened down by the approach of that great analyzer of all mortal deeds and mortal causes, death, all that had been before obscure and intricate, was rendered plain as noonday. And Sibyl shamed not to confess her sense of her own hapless error, an error which had robbed her lover of all chance

of happiness on earth; had robbed herself of life; and Arden, melted and tortured by contrition, and half-repentant, as has been shown already, of the part which he had played, and morbidly dissatisfied with the result of the experiment, sat groaning in the spirit by her pillow, and confessed, in very hopelessness of heart, that he had cast away his all for a mere vision; for a most vain and senseless fancy.

But in these bitter moments it was hers, as the true woman's part, still to enact the comforter; to point the real evils, which, while in health and happiness, she scarce would have admitted such, that he had battled to put down; and the more real benefits which must spring up hereafter from the anarchy that had succeeded to the fall of Charles, as darkness follows the decline of day only to bring forth the more pure and mellow moonshine.

She died. And Arden was, indeed, alone; alone forever; without one tie on earth; without one kindred creature through whose veins the pure blood of his fathers poured its unmingled current; without one selfish hope; without one feeling left that could disturb or alienate his absolute devotion to his country's weal. He looked upon her cold corpse with a tearless eye; he saw the fresh green sod heaped over her; and felt that he had sacrificed his all, and sacrificed it in chase of a phantom.

He felt that England was as far from rational and real liberty as at the war's commencement, and how much farther from the blessed calm of an established peace. A cold and bitter mood of grief had fallen on him, obscuring all his brighter qualities, and overpowering the energies of a mind once as elastic and pervading as the tempered steel. It had changed his very soul. It had made him—even more than all the previous sorrows he had known, the previous perils he had faced, the previous disappointments he had writhed in bearing—an altered, a new man. The brilliant dreams and the warm hopes of youth had faded long ago. The high and noble purposes of middle age, the pure ambition to be a benefactor, not of his countrymen alone, but of the universal human race, the steady longing after an honest and clear fame, the sacred fire of patriotism itself, were now, if not extinct, so chilled

and overwhelmed by the dull apathy of settled woe, that it will need much again to raise them into luminous and active being

It was just when he was the most absorbed in this sad stupor, some three or four days only after the death of his lost Sibyl, that an express arrived to rouse him from his sullen musings among the shades of Woodleigh, which had become once more his own, he being next of kin to his untimely parted cousin. It was an express from that great man, who, more than ever now, since the decease of Charles, swayed as he chose the destinies of England, craving his instant presence to confer on matters of the highest import both to themselves and to their country

It is true that long before this period, Sir Edgar Arden had ceased to feel that deep respect and almost veneration which he once had entertained for Cromwell. He had long found his suspicions growing daily and hourly more strong; daily and hourly more confirmed by overt actions. Still with such wondrous skill and subtlety had the arch-schemer wound along his path, onward, still onward, that it was quite impossible to say at what point of his ascent, or if, indeed, at all, he had passed the confines of sincerity and patriotism, to enter the stern regions of ambition.

That Cromwell at this time enjoyed a power eminently great, and at the same time dangerous, Arden could not deny; that he had attained to that power by his own energy, was self apparent; but whether he had framed the course which had exalted him according to the dictates of religion and of conscience, and so found his own high fortunes while seeking but for England's weal; or whether he had struggled forward to his own grandeur as his only goal, he could not even now decide.

One thing he clearly saw, that the experiment had for the present failed. That by the death of Charles tyranny was indeed put down—but put down only to be followed by anarchy—or by a tyranny more mighty than the former. But, seeing this, he saw no present way of extrication save through the medium of the very man whom he suspected, whom he feared, the most. He therefore judged it most advisable not to permit the alienation which had been

growing up between them to become absolute; but keeping a shrewd watch on all his motions, to discover, if possible, what might be his ulterior views, and so far as his own influence might avail, to keep him in the path of honesty and honor.

"He *can* do more for England than any living man," he said to himself, as, in obedience to the unexpected summons, he shook off his lethargy and set his foot in the stirrup—"he *can*, beyond all question, and let us hope he *will*. He *had* high virtues once, no less than wondrous talents; and certainly, I know not why I should assume it as a fact that they are now extinct. And *I*—since I have lost all else—since I have worn away the flower of my years, wasted the sweetness of my whole existence in struggling for my country, why should I hesitate to pour out the dregs of an unprized and wearisome existence; why should I doubt to cast away life itself, also, a life which only separates me from her, if that my life can profit England? I will—I will, as I have begun, so persevere! Consistency and honor now alone are left to me, and never will I disobey their dictates. A name which though I never shall transmit to others, I, at least, its last owner, never will disgrace."

He took his solitary way to London, and if not the less sad, was at the least less bitterly absorbed by sorrow. He mingled, with a grave aspect, certainly, and a subdued demeanor, in the chance society of men, and struggled, not all unsuccessfully, to shake off a melancholy which, though it was a luxury to indulge, he felt it a duty to repress.

The third day toward nightfall found him already in the heart of the metropolis, which, under its new masters, wore a composed and steady aspect of society, not, indeed, very gay or pleasing, yet praiseworthy, at least, for the entire absence of rude revelry or riot in the crowded streets. Arden found Cromwell, as when he last had visited him, occupying the royal chambers of Whitehall, but with far more of pomp and show than he had as yet witnessed about the person of the Independent leader. Two or three officers, richly attired, waited in the anterooms, and a page, sumptuously though not gayly dressed, opened the door

of his apartment to the gallant baronet with silent reverence.

The cordial warmth which Oliver exhibited would in in itself have called forth something of suspicion from the mind of Sir Edgar; for, latterly, although not absolutely estranged from each other, there had been a passing coldness, a want of frank and cheerful confidence between them, which caused the present alteration of the general's air and manner to be very obvious. But, to confirm his fears, after a short discourse on various matters connected with state policy and questions of the day—

"You have not heard, I trow, Sir Edgar," Cromwell began abruptly, after a little pause, "you have not heard of the new trust the parliament hath now of late conferred on me?—even the lord lieutenancy of Ireland, with command of the forces needful to crush the embers of this accursed rebellion that yet devours the land!"

"I have not," answered Arden. "Have you accepted it?"

"Surely I have," returned the general; "for, of a truth, the commons house, ay! and the council of state, also, were very urgent—yea unto the taking no denial. For at the first, I would have fain denied it. Truly my soul is sick of war and tumult, and would retire to the privacy of humble and domestic life. But, as I say, they would take no denial. And moreover, after a while, diligently searching the Lord's will, praying myself with earnest zeal, and profiting, too, by the prayers of better men, I have been convinced that my repugnance to this duty was not of the Lord — but a backsliding, rather, and a fainting of the flesh; a yielding to the vain temptations of the world and the devil. It is not for me to draw my hand from off the handle of the plough, when He hath manifestly fixed on me the task of turning up the hard and stubborn glebe."

"A powerful army, doubtless, is assigned to you," said Arden, half musing, half inquiring.

"Doubtless! Twelve thousand horse and foot; the picked men of the host, that hath so gloriously worked out the freedom of the land; the regiments and their commanders subject to my own choice. One hundred thousand pounds of sterling silver in the military chest,

and all things corresponding. Verily, by the Lord's help soon shall we have peace as settled in the wildest bog of Ireland as in the heart of London!"

"It is a great trust!" Arden again answered coldly, "the *greatest* for a citizen. When set you forth?"

"Speedily," Cromwell replied, "right speedily. But ere I go, I have yet one thing to perform. The parliament, as not content with these high honors it hath done me, commands me to appoint all the chief officers. The master of the horse is a high post, important, onerous, and of great weight. Now, Edgar Arden, though we have differed somewhat lately, I do know you able, valiant, honest, and trusty—such are the attributes needful for this great office—go with me—it is yours."

"I thank you," Edgar replied, perfectly unmoved. "Think me not ignorant of the honor, nor yet ungrateful when I decline that honor. In truth, I am sick of blood—blood of my countrymen. I would to God no drop of it had been shed here in England; for I do fear me very much it hath been shed in vain."

Oliver was evidently discomposed; he rose abruptly, and took many turns about the room, muttering to himself; then stopping suddenly,

"Mark me," he said! "I love you, Edgar Arden, I have loved you ever—yea, since that first night when we met nigh Royston—I have ever felt that in you there is an honesty different from that of men. You preach not, neither do you pray much in public, yet I do well believe you have more true religion than half the saints of the land. You can fight, too, with the foremost—and counsel better than the wisest. You must go with me. You must strike on my side. Surely the Lord shall yet do greater things for this regenerate land than he hath done already—though wondrous are his works and great his loving-kindness—and it is graven in my heart within me, that by me shall he do them, although I be but a rough instrument, a blunt and edgeless tool, for his omnipotent right hand. Go with me, now, go with me—and I say not that I will make you great—for, of a truth, it is not for a grovelling worm upon the earth to speak of *making* earthworms great. Creation is the Lord's only—but I do say that my for-

tunes shall be thy fortunes, also, and my hopes thine. Lo! you, I have a daughter—one yet a maid, comely, too, in the flesh, discreet, and virtuous, and sage, even my youngest, Frances. Again! I say not that I will give her to thee in the bonds of wedlock; for, truly, hearts cannot be given and transferred like golden dross; neither do I esteem it wise or lawful for a parent to do any force to those most strong and inward inclinations. But this I will say—for it is a truth, I do profess to you a very truth—that I believe the maid hath not looked hitherto on any man to love him—and that rather than any man on earth I would see thee my son-in-law. Thine own high qualities, so that the Lord look down upon this work, will do the rest. Give me thine hand; say that thou wilt go with me. Surely thou shalt be next in power unto myself—next in the glory of the deeds we shall accomplish in the Lord's cause and England's. Thou shalt see yet and share in very mighty changes—"

"I were dishonest," Sir Edgar interrupted him, with vehemence, "I were dishonest—a base traitor to my cause, my conscience, and my country, did I pretend to doubt your meaning. I read you, sir, I read *you* as you were an open book before me—but *me* you know not, nor can comprehend at all. Neither—great as you are, and greater as you wish to be—can you tempt me one inch from the straight path. My heart, General Cromwell, is in the grave, in the grave with that peerless woman who once, at your hands, saved me from a father's madness. Not—not to be a queen's husband, would I forego the memory of her on earth—the hope of her in heaven. As for what you call greatness, I care not for it; nay, I loathe it. For it is villany—dishonor—shame. Farewell! I leave you, sir, in sorrow—in strong and bitter sorrow. Fairly I tell you to your face, I do suspect you very deeply; and if it be as I suspect, I will oppose you to the death. Pause, pause—and oh! consider—it is a little thing to be a king!—a tyrant!—a usurper! It is the mightiest of all things to have the power to be so, and the virtue to decline that power! Be, as you may be, your country's friend, its guardian, and its father. Beware! I say beware how you attempt to be its king.

Better is a pure conscience than a golden bawble! He who cannot err hath said, 'what shall it avail a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul!' You say you love me—I did once love—honor—esteem—ay! venerate you—you, Oliver Cromwell. And rather would I hew off the best limb of my body than see you play the part which I now fear you meditate. Answer me not, sir, no profession can convince me. Actions—actions, sir—actions only can prove to me your truth. Sincerely I pray God that I may be in error; sincerely I pray God you may be strengthened to cast temptation far behind you; to be the great, the glorious, the immortal benefactor of your land, you may be, if you will. Go, then, to Ireland—go—do *your* duty; I will adhere to mine. My sword is in its scabbard, never to come forth more unless my country shall require it against a foreign foe or—a domestic tyrant! Farewell! may heaven give you strength—farewell!"

"Do we part friends?" asked Oliver, whose strong nerves were greatly shaken, and whose mind, wholly impassible at ordinary moments to such feelings, was penetrated by a sense of absolute humiliation, and overpowered by the sublime and genuine force of real virtue; "do we part friends?"

"And shall, I trust, *meet* friends!" Edgar replied, clasping his hand with fervor, while a tear stood in his dark eye. You have no truer friend, no more sincere admirer—be but yourself—within the four seas that gird Britain. May heaven protect you, and preserve you—as I have thought you, as I would think you ever—noble."

Again he grasped his hand, wrung it hard, turned, and left the room.

"Can it be so?" cried Cromwell, in a low, thoughtful tone, "can it be so?—and hath he read my inward soul—read it more truly than myself?" He strode across the room with a loud step and a kingly port. "Not king—but the first man in England! Ha!" but again his proud glance sank, his firm step faltered, and he struck his bosom with the eager violence of passionate repentance. "Avaunt! avaunt! get thee behind me!—no! no! he erred! he erred! yet had he well-nigh made me deem my-

self a villain! 'Not king, but the first man in England!' Well, first in virtue—first in sincere God-seeking piety—first, it may be, in good report—which men call fame—in the Lord's favor and the people's love. But not—not first in power, or wealth, or rank. Not first, as that bold Arden said, in villany. No! no! *he* erred, and *I* am sound at heart—my breast is proof against thy devices. Avaunt, thou crafty devil! I am strong—strong—strong in virtue!"

He saw not Arden any more for many a year of peril and success; of labor and of sin; and of the world's arch phantom, glory.

But six days afterward, Edgar beheld *him*, seated in his coach of state, dragged by six stately horses, tossing their plumed heads and shaking their superb caparisons as proudly as though they were conscious of the freight they drew along the crowded streets.

He marked the quiet air of exultation and of triumph that sat on his firm lip and glanced from his deep eye. He noted the unwonted splendor—the gorgeous dresses and accoutrements of his life-guard—eighty young men—majors and colonels of the army, mounted more splendidly than the pretorian band of any king in Europe, sheathed in bright steel, with waving plumes, and floating scarfs, and all the bravery of the cavaliers.

He saw the haughty bearing of his son Henry, his lieutenant and master of the horse. He saw the soldiery, in their magnificent array, trooping along, with their proud banners flaunting in the summer sunshine, and the triumphant clangor of their military music waking the merriest echoes behind their adored leader; and, above all, he heard the thundering acclamations of the multitude as that pomp swept along.

Then, with a heavy sigh, he turned from that sight, in all other eyes so glorious and majestic—a sigh for Cromwell's fame!—a sigh for England's peace!

OLIVER CROMWELL.

BOOK IV.

Now could I Casca,
Name to thee a man most like this night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol;
A man no mightier than thyself, or me,
In personal action; yet prodigious grown,
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.
Casca.. 'T is Cæsar that you mean: is it not, Cassius?

SHAKSPEARE—*Julius Cæsar.*

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

DUNBAR.

And Dunbar field resound thy praises loud.
MILTON'S SONNETS.

The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well.
MARMION.

ONCE more upon the charger's back! once more among the trumpets!

A year had passed since Cromwell, invested with his new dignity of lord-lieutenant, landed in Dublin Bay; a year, during the course of which his arms, attended everywhere by victory, and edged by deadly vengeance, had swept like a tornado over devoted Ireland.

Her strongest holds were levelled to the dust, piles of fire-blackened stones quenched with the life-blood of their massacred defendants. It was a year of merciless destruction, of unsparing, indiscriminating slaughter, a year which cast a deep stain on the name of Cromwell, never before attainted by the dark charge of cruelty; a year, the miseries of which were such that they have branded that name on the memories of the Irish with such imperishable hate, that, even to this day, their direst malediction is, "the curse of Cromwell be upon you."

From his career of victory and havoc, Oliver was re-

called in the earlier months of 1650, to return to England and oppose the prince of Wales, who, having landed in the north, had been proclaimed and crowned the King of Scots, and, at the head of a large army, was preparing to assert his rights. With his accustomed energy, he instantly appointed Ireton his lord deputy and Ludlow his lieutenant of the horse, delegating all his powers to them, and leaving them to finish what he had so effectually set in motion; and in a very short space was in London to receive the parliament's instructions.

Here he was welcomed with the highest honors and rewards; and, after some delay, owing to the refusal of Lord Fairfax, who was himself of that persuasion, to command against the Scottish Presbyterians—a refusal which, with much urgency, and, it would seem, with real and unfeigned sincerity, Oliver strove to combat—he set forth, invested with the supreme command of the land forces of the parliament, to crush, as was expected, at a single blow, the power of the Scottish royalists, and lead the second Charles in triumph to the footstool of the proud republicans, or to expel him from the kingdom of his fathers a despairing fugitive.

In this their overweening confidence, however, the English government were for a time disappointed; for, having crossed the Tweed, and advanced almost to the walls of Edinburgh before the last days of July, their general was so far from gaining any real or definitive advantage, that, after two or three smartly-contested skirmishes, and much manœuvering against the veteran Lesley, who resolutely declined a general action, he was compelled, by want of forage and provisions, to reship five hundred of his men from Musselburgh for Berwick, and with the remnant, described by one of his best officers as "a poor, shattered, hungry, and discouraged army," to fall back in some confusion on Dunbar, where he might be supported by his fleet and storeships.

Having been pressed so closely by the Scottish horse on his retreat from Musselburgh to Haddington that he was at one time in much danger—his rear-guard, which had been outstripped by the centre and advance, being exposed for a short time to the chance of an attack from

the whole power of the Scots—by favor of a misty night he arrived within a few miles of Dunbar late in the evening of the first day of September.

On the morning of the second, Oliver's army lying in a low, swampy plain, with an exhausted country in their rear, a mountainous ridge held by a superior force in front, a stormy and tempestuous sea upon their right, and the weather such as to prevent any communication with the fleet, scarce any situation can be fancied more desperate and appalling than that of the invaders.

Throughout that morning he saw the host of Lesley holding the hill with resolute determination, in a position of such formidable strength that he himself has mentioned it as one wherein "ten men were better to hinder than a hundred to make way."

Below this hill was a small narrow plain, running down on the right hand to the sea, between the ridge then occupied by Lesley and a deep cleugh or dell, through which a rapid and impetuous stream found its way to the German Ocean, into which it falls at Broxmouth Park. But, toward evening, he perceived a movement in the hostile lines, and shortly afterward, a mighty shout rang on his ears. Immediately he leaped upon his horse, and, galloping forth with a handful of his chosen guard, rode to the brink of the ravine, from which he might behold the Scottish ranks pouring tumultuously down from their commanding station into that narrow strip whereon their very numbers would but operate against themselves, vociferously calling on their officers to "lead them down to Ramoth Gilead that they might slay the foe—even the blasphemous accursed Philistine!"

For a while he gazed steadily upon them without speaking; and, by the curl upon his lip, and the deep sneer of his expressive nostril, many of those around him fancied that he saw and detected some deep purpose in the hostile movement; but when band after band came rushing down, column after column of dark pikemen, brigade after brigade of guns, and, finally, the horse and the reserve, with Scotland's royal banner, shouting, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"—their favorite war-cry—the

gloom which had sat upon his brow for many days passed suddenly and was succeeded by a wild gleam of joy.

"The Lord," he cried, flinging his arm aloft, and giving the spur to his charger till he plunged and bolted from the earth—"the Lord of Hosts, he hath delivered them into mine hands!" and—while the numbers of the Scottish, vastly superior to his own, and three times more than could be marshalled fittingly upon that battle-ground, were drawing up, as best they might, their crowded and disordered ranks, where they had neither room to fight, nor any way by which to fly if routed—he coolly reconnoitred the ravine, passable only at one point, and that, though pervious even to artillery, a rugged ford, between steep banks, shadowed with timber-trees, and domineered by earthy mounds scarped naturally by the wintry floods.

Having determined instantly, in his own mind, on an attack *en masse* upon the morrow, he ordered an advanced guard of horse and foot to occupy this all-important station; selected nine of his best regiments to force the passage at the earliest dawn of day; and then, announcing his design to his assembled officers in council, and ordering all things to be in preparation for the attack with the first glimmering of the east, threw himself down on his camp bed without removing any part of his attire, and slept so soundly that his attendants had no easy task to rouse him from his dreamless and untroubled slumbers when the appointed hour had arrived.

Before he was in the saddle day had dawned fully; and then, having relied on Lambert for the due execution of the orders on which his plan depended, he galloped to the front, expecting to find all in readiness, and wondering that his artillery was not yet heard, covering the passage of his troops. He reached the advanced lines, and all was in confusion. During the night, Lesley, aware of the importance of that point, had completely cut off the guard detached for the defense of the ravine—so completely, indeed, that not a soldier had escaped to bear the tidings of defeat to his superiors—and occupied it with a force equal at least to that which Cromwell had appointed to oppose him.

The sky was gray already, but the approach of morning was delayed, or, at the least, obscured, by a thick mist arising from the seaboard, and spreading over the flat land on which both armies had slept upon their weapons in grim preparation for the coming strife. A powerful horse-regiment, which had been chosen to advance the foremost, was in the very act of passing; some having crossed the stream, and now laboriously struggling up the banks on the Scotch side, and the rest even now battling with the heavy current, when a tremendous fire of musketry and ordnance was poured upon them while in confusion; and when, despite this fearful obstacle, they forced the pass, they were charged instantly, and thrown into disorder by a brigade of cuirassiers appointed for this duty by the veteran Lesley.

While they were fighting with a desperate obstinacy, which, had they been relieved or reënforced, would even yet have rendered them victorious, the infantry, who, in advancing to support them, had suffered terribly by the well-served artillery of the Presbyterians, were in their turn charged, broken, and pushed back across the cleugh by the pike-regiments, which then, as in all former periods, composed the pride and strength of the Scotch host. Just at this moment Cromwell reached a small eminence that overlooked the scene; he saw his scheme well-nigh frustrated; one of his best brigades of horse almost annihilated; his infantry repulsed; his attack not merely disappointed, but on the very point of being turned against himself; and in all this time Lambert, his major-general, had not brought up a single gun, much less attempted to assist the charge, or cover the retreat of his defeated squadrons.

A dark red flush rose to his cheek, his brow. His eye flashed lurid fire, as he dashed up to the artillerists, fiercely commanding them, with a voice tremulous and hoarse from ire—"Shoot sharply and upon the instant, or, as the Lord Jehovah liveth, ye shall swing from these oaks ere the sun rises." Awed by his threats and stimulated by his presence, they struggled hard to redeem their error. Gun after gun belched forth its cloud of smoke and flame, and the shot plunged, with accurate aim

and awful execution, into the serried masses of the Scotch, enabling the discomfited and shattered cavalry to draw off and repass the stream.

"Ride for your life," cried Oliver to one, the nearest, of his staff, "and bring up my pike-regiment—mine own, I say—under the trusty Goff! and Jepherson's horse-squadrons, and Lumley's musketeers! Ride—ride, I tell thee, on the spur! And thou," he added, "away to Lambert, Kingsland; let him bring up more guns—more guns!"

And, too impatient to await the execution of his orders in quiet inactivity, he galloped furiously, attended only by a slender staff and a captain's guard of cuirassiers, down to the steep banks of the ford. There he stood, coolly gazing on the advancing ranks of Lesley, a mark for the artillery, and even for the small arms of the Scottish; the balls from which shivered the trees and tore the ground about him, but harmed not, strange to say, either himself or any of the little group behind.

It was, indeed, a critical conjuncture—a stout division of field-guns was whirled up, at the speed of powerful and active horses, to the brink opposite the very spot where Cromwell stood; and now they were unlimbered; and now, with matches lighted, the cannoneers were busily engaged directing them toward him. Then, from the dark and wooded gorge beneath, a prolonged flourish of their trumpets announced the presence of the enemy; who now, the Independents having been forced back bodily from their position, were crowding down, in numbers almost irresistible, in their turn to attempt the passage. The eye of Cromwell for the first time grew anxious, and his lip quivered visibly, as with the blast the heavy tramp of the advancing pikemen was heard above the ripple of the water, and the bright heads of their long weapons were seen glimmering above the mist-wreaths which partially obscured the ranks that bore them.

A mounted officer dashed up to him, spoke a few hurried words, and, ere the gloom had cleared from Cromwell's brow, the steady march of his own regiment fell joyously upon his ear.

They halted, as the heads of their long files came up,

abreast of their commander; while, with their matches ready lighted, six hundred musketeers, under the gallant Lumley, hastened to line the hither verge, availing themselves of every crag or stunted bush whereby to hide themselves, and whence to pour their unseen volleys on the host below.

With a few words, fiery, and terse, and full of that enthusiastic confidence which had so wonderfully gained the hearts of all that followed him, Oliver now addressed his chosen veterans. In deep, and, as it might seem, sullen silence, they attended while he spoke; but as he ended, such a shout arose as startled Lesley's host and roused them from their dreams of victory. "Oliver! Oliver! hurrah!" and, with the words, they rushed down headlong on the spears of the advancing foe, shouting their cry —"the Lord! the Lord of Hosts!" Meanwhile the musketry of Lumley was not silent. Bright, bright, and quick it flashed from every gray stone, every bracken bush, and every tuft of broom that fringed those broken banks. And, to increase the din, ten guns, which Lambert, wakened at length to energy, wheeled up at the full gallop, opened their fire upon the feebler ordnance of the Scottish, killing the cannoneers, dismounting their light pieces, and silencing, after a single ill-directed volley, their fruitless fire.

Taken thus absolutely by surprise, the Presbyterian squadrons reeled in their turn; and louder from the depths of the ravine arose that awful shout, "The Lord! the Lord of Hosts!" as, through the waters, whose dark current, dark with human gore, flowed feebly now, choked and obstructed with the bodies of the dead and dying, that irresistible and never-conquered band charged onward, bearing the relics of the enemy before them, with shriek, and yell, and execration, up! up! at the pike's point! up to the level ground whence, flushed with hope of easy triumph, they had but now descended.

And still the well-aimed shot of Lumley's skirmishers fell thick among the flyers. With half a glance Cromwell perceived—and with him to perceive was instantly to profit by the moment of advantage. Putting himself at the head of Jepherson's brigade of ironsides, which

came up at a rapid trot just as Goff's pikemen were appearing on the farther brow, brandishing high in air his formidable rapier, and pointing with a grim smile to the strife raging and reeling opposite, he spurred his charger down the bank. Two bounds bore him across the chasm, and, with a louder clang of corslet, spur, and scabbard than had resounded yet that day, down rushed those zealot horsemen!

The morning hitherto had been dull, gloomy, and dispiriting; but, as the leader of the ironsides spurred his black charger up the steep ascent, and paused an instant there—a breathing statue, bolder, and nobler, and more massively majestic than any sculpture from the inspired chisel of the Greek—contemplating the features of the already half-gained battle—for from their right wing to their centre the whole army of the covenanters, crowded together and unable to manœuvre, was reeling to and fro in tumultuous disarray—just at that instant the mist bodily soared upward, and the broad glorious sunlight streamed out rejoicingly, kindling up all the field of battle and the rich valley to the right, and the superb expanse of the wide German Ocean, now calm and cradling on its azure bosom the friendly vessels of the commonwealth, that loomed like floating castles through the dispersing fog.

It was a wonderful—a spirit-stirring change—and he who witnessed its effects the first, inspired by the sublimity of what he looked upon, struck by a thought no less sublime, cried out, flinging his arm aloft in proud anticipation of his coming triumph—"Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered!"

The aspect of the man, rising, as it were, suddenly from out the bowels of the earth—the stern composure of his halt—the simultaneous outburst of the sunbeams—and, above all, the wonderful quotation, delivered in a voice so loud as to be heard by hundreds of both hosts, and yet so passionless and clear as to strike every heart with something of that awe which would attach to the miraculous—completed what the ordinary means of warfare had so well commenced.

Their broadswords flashing in the newly-risen sunbeams, and their united voices pealing forth, as it were

by inspiration, the apt words of their leader, the ironsides swept onward to the charge; and, without pause or hesitation, catching enthusiasm from the cries of those who went before, regiment after regiment of the invaders poured unopposed over the perilous chasm; and, forming as they reached the level ground, plunged in with shot of harquebuss and push of pike upon the wavering masses, that could now offer only an inert resistance to their impetuous onset.

For a short time the native valor of the Scots supported them after their flank was turned, and their whole line confused and shaken beyond all hope of restoration. For a short time they stood firm with their serried spears —shoulder to shoulder—foot to foot—when one man fell, another stepping instantly into his place—and only ceasing to resist when each had ceased to live.

But, charged front, flank, and rear, by horse and foot, pell-mell, the cannon-shot making huge gaps in their dense columns, it was impossible that they, or any men, should hold out. They broke; they scattered; they retreated not, but fled; in wild and irretrievable dismay, pursued, cut down, and slaughtered by the fresh cavalry of Cromwell, who for eight miles had execution of the flyers;— while the triumphant general, calling a halt when he perceived the battle won, sang, with his zealot legions swelling the stormy chorus, the hundred and seventeenth Psalm, in honor of that Lord who, as he said, "after the first repulse, had given up his enemies as stubble to the strong arms and the victorious weapons of his own elected people."

CHAPTER II.

WORCESTER.

And Worcester's laureate wreath.

MILTON'S *Sonnets.*

No blame be to you, sir; for all was lost.
* * * The king himself
Of his wings destitute, the army broken,
And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying
Through a straight lane; the enemy full-hearted,
Lolling the tongue with slaughtering.

Cymbeline.

FOR several months after the battle of Dunbar both parties rested in comparative inaction. Edinburgh castle, after a brief siege, was surrendered by Dundas, without, indeed, if the assertions of the royalists are to be credited, any sufficient reason. During the winter Oliver remained in the metropolis of Scotland, engaged, for the most part, in disputations with the Presbyterian clergy, who hated him with bitter and incessant rancor; and here he was attacked by a sharp fit of ague, threatening to undermine his constitution, and actually reducing him so low that it was early in July before he was prepared to take the field.

Meanwhile, Charles had been crowned at Perth, on the first day of January, 1651, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, most of the nobles being present in their robes of state and coronets; had sworn both to the "National Covenant" and to the "League and Covenant;" had levied a strong army under command of the stout veteran Lesley; and had taken post, meaning to act on the defensive, on strong ground in the neighborhood of Torwood.

Here for some days the hostile armies faced each other, manœuvring to gain, if possible, advantages that might ensure success; Oliver continually desiring, Lesley as obstinately shunning, any contact that might lead to a general action. Skirmishes occurred almost every day be-

tween the cavalry and outposts; but none of much importance, whether from loss sustained or permanent results on the campaign; till, at last, wearied by a game in which he had sagacity to see that he in the long run must be the loser, Cromwell transported his whole army into Fife, besieging and in two days making himself the master of the town of Perth. His object in this bold manœuvre was to draw down the Scottish army from its ground of vantage, and in this he succeeded fully, though not, perhaps, exactly in the manner he had contemplated; for, breaking up his camp at Torwood on the thirty-first, Charles turned his face toward the border, leading some twelve or fourteen thousand men, with the intent of concentrating his powers at Carlisle, where he expected to be reënforced by a great rising of the royalists *en masse* from all the northern English counties.

The consternation throughout England at the news of this advance was general and excessive; the parliament were in extremity of terror and suspicion; Bradshaw himself, stout-hearted as he was in public, privately owned his fears, and more than half suspected the good faith of Cromwell. Their terrors grew more and more real daily, when it was told in London that the cavaliers of Lancashire were gathering head under Lord Derby, and the Presbyterians threatening to make common cause with them under their Major-general Massey. And, in good sooth, had it not been for the insane fanaticism of the Scottish clergy, who, with a fierce intolerance that ruined their own cause, would suffer none to join the standard of the king without subscribing to the covenant, the forces of the royalists would have been truly formidable, and might have, not improbably, succeeded in restoring Charles to his ancestral throne. But happily for England, hundreds of gallant cavaliers and hundreds of stout-hearted English Presbyterians were refused the miserable boon of sacrificing life and fortune in behalf of the least grateful prince of an ungrateful line; because, forsooth, they would not sacrifice the interests also of their native land to the intolerant and selfish policy of Scotland.

Still, though his ranks swelled not as rapidly as, under a more prudent system, they would assuredly have done,

Charles marched with little opposition, and still less real loss, as far into his southern kingdom as the fair town of Worcester. Lilburne, indeed, with a small Independent party, surprised and defeated, at Wigan-lane, in Lancashire, three or four hundred gentlemen commanded by the Earl of Derby; who, himself desperately wounded, escaped with difficulty from falling into the hands of his rude conquerors. Lambert and Harrison attempted, with inferior forces, to dispute the passage of the Mersey with the king; but, after a few ineffectual charges, and offering Charles an opportunity of bringing on a general action, were forced to draw off, and permit the enemy to enter Worcester unmolested. Here he was instantly proclaimed, amid the acclamations of the mob and the good wishes, faint though faithful, of the loyal gentlemen assembled in that city.

While tarrying here it became visible to Charles and his advisers that succor came not in by any means so rapidly as they had hoped; that the Welsh cavaliers, who had been most severely handled in their last insurrections, were not disposed to risk a general rising; and that there was but little hope of any common or extensive movement of the royalists, until some such advantage should be gained as would, at least, be a justification to their daring.

In this predicament it was decided that they should await Cromwell's arrival from the north, and give him battle there beneath the walls of Worcester. Nor, indeed, had they long to tarry; for, with his wonted energy of mind and motion, that able leader had pursued the footsteps of his enemy, so that, within a very few days of the king's arrival, the various detachments of the pursuing army concentrated on the Severn, and on the twenty-eighth of August Oliver joined in person, and found at his disposal not less than thirty thousand soldiers of all arms, regular troops and militia both enumerated.

No sooner were the hostile armies face to face than skirmishes, in which there was much desperate fighting and much loss on both sides, commenced and were continued daily. Lambert, after a well-disputed contest, carried the bridge at Upton, and established his position, Massey having been wounded so severely as to be well

nigh hors de combat. The Scots, on the first day of September, destroyed two bridges on the Team about three miles from Worcester, and the second was consumed in preparations for re-establishing the communication.

Late on that evening Oliver dismounted from his charger at head-quarters, and issued his directions, brief, luminous, and rapid, for the morrow—which, he reminded his high-spirited but superstitious officers, was his peculiar day of glory—"A day whereon, from his childhood, by the Lord's wondrous grace, up to that present time, he never had attempted aught but he had therefrom reaped a golden harvest. Wherefore," he said, "let us fall on more boldly, mindful of the last anniversary which saw the glorious blessing at Dunbar, and putting trust in our own stout right arms, and in the aid of that Lord who is all in all; trusting, I say, that this shall prove a final and decisive end to our labors; yea! and a crowning mercy!" Fleetwood was then commanded to force the passage of the Team at noon, when they supposed the cavaliers would have abandoned any thoughts of a decisive action for that day, while Cromwell should himself establish a bridge of boats across the Severn at Bunshill.

The morning of the third broke gloriously and bright. The Independent forces were full of ardor for the onset, inflamed even beyond their wont by the prophetic exhortations of their leader, who, himself kindling like a war-horse to the trumpets, proclaimed to them, no longer darkly nor in doubtful hints, but in wild, glowing eloquence, that they should now ride forth to glory; that their right hands should teach them terrible things; that they should smite the sons of Zeruiah utterly, and suffer not a man of them to live.

At the appointed hour Fleetwood attacked in force, and, after a most furious cannonade, carried the passage of the Team, and was already strengthening his position, when Charles, alarmed by the incessant firing, despatched strong reinforcements to support his friends, with orders at all hazards to prevent a bridge from being formed.

Again the action became hot and doubtful; and now the Independents were forced back, although fighting foot by foot, before the masses of the royalists; but just

when these imagined their success decisive, Fleetwood in turn was reinforced, and, acting with a fiery daring, that was well seconded by his stout veterans, charged instantly along his whole line and repulsed the Scots.

Those sturdy troops, however, rallied instantly, thus hoping to afford their countrymen a chance of breaking Cromwell's regiments on the other side of the Severn. The ground on which they fought, though for the most part level, was intersected everywhere by thick strong fences of old thorn, with banks and ditches; and each of these positions was lined with musketry, and was defended with an obstinate and dogged courage that cost the Independents hundreds on hundreds of their bravest soldiers. One by one they were forced, however, at the pike's point; and still, as Fleetwood's men advanced, the Scotch pike-regiments rushed on, charging with more of spirit than they had displayed throughout the whole course of the war; and still, when forced to give way, leisurely and in perfect order, falling back to the next fence, which was by this time glancing with the sharp volleys of their musketeers. But, notwithstanding all their efforts, ere nightfall they were driven from their every line with unexampled loss, beaten at every point, and forced to seek for refuge in the walls of Worcester.

On the other side the river, the battle raged with equal fury and almost equal doubtfulness during five hours at the least. Cromwell, who had, from a flying battery of heavy guns, commenced a cannonade upon the fort built to defend the main gate of the town, and brought up all his forces in two lines to assault the place, was charged at all points by a general sally of the whole infantry of the king's army, who, issuing simultaneously from several gates, firing and cheering till the welkin rang as they came on, burst on the newly-levied regiments and the militia with such enthusiastic valor, that they drove them back in absolute confusion, took Cromwell's battering guns, and turned them with effect on his disordered squadrons.

But at this juncture Charles was unequal to the great part which he had to play; had he brought out his cavalry, and charged again while the militia of the Indepen

dents were forced pell-mell into the ranks of the reserve, he hardly could have failed of gaining a complete victory.

But his horse, save one squadron, were within the city; he saw his error when it was too late, for the keen eye of Cromwell saw it likewise, and gave him not a second's space even to struggle to redeem it. Leading his cavalry, his own invincibles, at a quick trot, in squadrons, through the intervals of the defeated regiments, he set up one of his triumphant hymns, and sweeping on like a springtide, with full five thousand horse, he beat the victors back, regained the cannon, sabreing the artillerists over their guns, and, while his cavalry re-formed, brought up the whole of his reserve—the conquerors of Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar—column on column—with a succession of tremendous charges that no troops then in the world could have resisted.

Scarce had his musketry and pikemen shattered the Scottish masses, ere he again came thundering down on them with his unrivalled horse.

And back! back! they were borne, hopelessly, irretrievably defeated. Still they had steadiness enough to retreat corps by corps, facing and firing till all were within the walls who had the power to crawl into that too precarious place of refuge. The last beams of the setting sun glanced red and lurid on the weapons of the last band that filed into the gates. A feeble cheer arose; and then a heavy cannonade ensued from the whole line of battlements, compelling Oliver to draw his forces off for a short space of relaxation and repose.

Short space it was, however; for twilight was yet lingering upon that fatal plain when Cromwell's trumpets summoned the fortress to surrender. The summons was refused, and instantly a dozen rockets rushed up the darkening sky; the batteries opened for ten minutes' space more furiously than ever; and then, with Cromwell personally leading them on sword in hand, with an appalling shout, the forlorn hope rushed forward. With ladders, and fascines, and boarding-ax, and pike, and every instrument most fearfully destructive, they hurried to the walls, which now, from every porthole, battlement, and embrasure, poured forth the ringing volleys of the ordnance.

Scarcely ten minutes passed, however, before the cannon again ceased; and the loud roar of thousands, blent with the maddened shrieks of women, and all the horrid noises of a captured city, announced that all was over. The gates were instantly thrown open, and in poured the furious zealots. Throughout the livelong night the din, and rage, and agony, and sacrilege continued; full fifteen hundred men were slaughtered in the streets; the thoroughfares were choked with corpses, the kennels ran knee-deep with human gore.

The morning of the fourth arose, like that of the preceding day, serene and glorious. The massacre was checked, peace was restored, and, at the least, comparative tranquillity. The king was a despairing fugitive, with scarce a hope remaining even of personal escape; his army was annihilated; his party was no more; his friends slaughtered or hopeless captives; his kingdom numbered, weighed, divided, and apportioned; and with a steady countenance, lighted by no fiery exultation, the winner returned praises to the Giver of all goodness for this HIS CROWNING MERCY!

CHAPTER III.

THE END OF THE RUMP.

. . Thou, too with thy frown
Annihilated senates.

Childe Harold.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise, when she
Sprang forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?

Ibid.

BY that one blow the empire of the parliament was confirmed through every corner of Great Britain; the last hope of the Stuarts was in the dust, never, as it seemed, more to rise; and he, the conqueror, was received in the metropolis as no scion of a royal stock had ever yet been

greeted. Congratulations, not of tongue-loyalty, but of sincere and grateful love, were showered upon him, as he drove into London in a gorgeous carriage, escorted by the speaker and the leading members of the commons, the mayor and sheriffs of the city, and an enormous multitude of every age and sex, who had gone out to Acton to show their gratitude and reverence to one whom many thought it no flattery to term the father and the savior of his country.

A lodging was assigned to him in the late residence of England's monarch. A solemn vote of thanks was tendered to him, all the members standing, when he resumed his seat. Petitions, couched in humbler language and decked with loftier adulation than any sovereign since Elizabeth had received from his subjects, were sent up to him daily. His praises were hymned by a lyre, whose melody shall never be forgotten while England's language lives upon the earth—the lyre of the immortal Milton. Although no king, Cromwell was, truly, the first man in England. Modestly, however, and decorously, and without any symptom of disorganizing or misproud ambition, did he bear his high honors. Wisdom and mercy marked his elevation in no less degree than energy and valor signalized his rise. His first act in the senate of the regenerated land was to obtain the passing of a general amnesty in the behalf of all who had engaged in the late war, with the exception only of some two or three, so obstinately and incurably devoted to the exiled family and hostile to the commonwealth, that public safety rendered their public punishment a measure not of cruelty or vengeance, but of necessity.

His next step was to procure a vote for taking into consideration the expediency of fixing a time for their own dissolution. The period named accordingly for the abdication of their immense, and, thus far, on the whole not ill-exerted powers, was the third day of November, 1654—a distance of three years—a distance neither justified by any rule or precedent of the constitution, nor in anywise desirable or necessary—but proving merely that having, by their exertions in past time, put down the tyranny established on the abuse of prerogative, they

were determined now to build up another tyranny on the more popular but scarce less perilous abuse of privilege. Having originally met in the year 1640, they had already held the reins of government for a far longer time than any former parliament, than would have been endured in times less turbulent; than was, in short, consistent with the rules of sound and equitable policy.

Having originally been composed of the best, the wisest, the most independent men of England, they had been gradually, but continually, reduced by death, desertion, and proscription, to a mere knot of party politicians, possessing nothing of a parliament except the name, desirous solely of their own emolument and power, and as entirely different from that magnificent assembly which had resisted the first Charles in all the terrors of his puissant sovereignty, as it is possible for one deliberative body to be different from another.

This, then, was the house which now passed a vote securing to itself the supreme power of the realm for three more years at least, in absolute defiance of the wishes of the people, of the army, and of the wisest patriots of the kingdom.

Scotland, meantime, subdued completely by the arms of Cromwell, wielded by Monk, his able deputy, was in a state of orderly and calm tranquillity widely at variance with the confused and hopeless anarchy in which it had been plunged for centuries by the fierce and continual rivalry of its dogmatic and intolerant sectarians. These had been now, at length, by the wise energy of Oliver, compelled to endure one another peacefully, and to forbear the angry disputations that had incessantly convulsed the country since the first era of the reformation.

Ireland, unhappy Ireland, desolated by the fierce vengeance of the Independent conquerors, was, perforce, quiet; and England, united, free, and wealthy, required only a short interval of time, under a firm and liberal government, to recover from the injuries which intestine discord must bring upon a state, how great soever may have been the benefits acquired by the means of the keen remedy, which is to nations as amputation to the human frame.

Abroad, her navies rode the ocean in triumphant, if

not undisputed, mastery; baffling at every fresh encounter, and subduing the brave and dogged Hollanders, who had so lately ploughed the narrow seas with brooms at their mastheads, as though they would have swept their island foemen from their path like worthless dust; bringing in unresisted rich and gallant prizes of the volatile and fiery Frenchman, who dared not, so had the genius of the proud republic overcrowed the spirit of that valiant nation, offer resistance to that people now, which they had set at naught while governed by a king; winning respect from the cold and haughty Spaniard; making her fame as universal, and her flag as widely known, as winds could blow or billows bear; and justifying the high boast of Oliver, which he had uttered years before to Arden, while yet an undistinguished member in the great council of the kingdom, that the time should come when the quality of Englishman should be as widely and as greatly honored as ever was the name of antique Roman.

It was, then, evident that there was no cause of fear which should in any degree sanction the continued *usurpation*, for such indeed it was, of the parliamentarian party, who seemed at this time to have again determined on trying the same line of measures which had failed so signally before the death of the first Charles.

Yet the commencement of the year 1652 found them still struggling to maintain the sway in absolute despite of their constituents. At this time England had been, for nearly four years, under the nominal form of a republic. The merit of successive parliaments and unbiased representation was on all sides acknowledged, yet was no step taken or even contemplated toward the establishment of such forms, or to the self-dissolution of the present house. Month after month matters continued thus, until another year had well-nigh joined its predecessor in that great catacomb—the past. The country was dissatisfied. The army waxed indignant, the rather so that—as before, in the year 1649—foreseeing the determined opposition of the soldiery to their unlawful measures, the commons once again began to agitate the subjects of retrenchment of expenses and the disbanding of one-half the standing forces.

Thus things went on, all prosperous abroad, all turbulent at home and dubious, until the month of August in the second year after the defeat of Worcester. At this time the leaders of the army, which had now reached the "very winter of their discontent," presented a petition of the host, by means of a deputation of six officers, the devoted friends of Cromwell, the boldest and most uncompromising favorers of universal freedom in elections and universal toleration—papistry alone excluded—in religious matters.

A council had been held some days before at Lenthall's house, of all the most important personages of the land, civil and military; whereat it was debated gravely, whether it would be better to perpetuate the commonwealth on terms to be fixed now immutably, or to establish once again the government as vested in a limited mixed monarchy. The officers in general were adverse to all form of royalty, as holding the name "king," alone and in itself, subversive of true freedom. The lawyers, on the other hand, with the sage Whitelocke at their head, maintained that the time-honored constitution of the land, as comprehending commons, lords, and king, was suited better, both for stability and safety, to the feelings and the principles of Englishmen, than a new form of democratic sway.

Cromwell, during this council as before, held himself much aloof; but, at the last, when urged for his opinion, admitted that he, "so far as he had thought upon so grave and onerous a question, inclined his judgment rather to the last expressed position, could it be any wise decided what person might be called advisedly to fill the vacant throne; since, of a truth, he thought not any of the idolatrous and heaven-condemned scions of the late man admissible to dwell among, much less to govern, this regenerate and freedom-seeking people."

By some most underhanded means the tidings of this meeting, and the opinions held therein were treacherously carried to the parliament, and they proceeded instantly to force a bill for their own dissolution through the house, encumbered with provisions wholly at variance with the freedom of election, and obnoxious to the great bulk of

the people. It was in vain that Harrison conjured them, with most moving eloquence, to pause in their career of reckless and unprincipled ambition. It was in vain. They were that instant on the point of voting that a new election should be holden for four-fifths of the members of the commons, the one-fifth remaining to hold their seats for a yet farther time, and to possess the right of sanctioning or disallowing the admission of the newly-chosen delegates, as they might deem them honest and worthy vessels, or unsuited to the work in hand.

At a late hour Oliver, who was waiting at Whitehall in his own private chambers, was advertised of these strange and unjust proceedings; and, instantly commanding a company of soldiers to repair to the house, entered and took his seat among the members. He was more plainly—nay, even slovenly—attired, than, when he had appeared in public, at any time for several years. His dress was of plain and coarse cloth, all black; doublet, and cloak, and hose, with stockings of gray worsted rolled up to his mid-thigh. While the debate continued he sat immersed, apparently, in thought, and listening most attentively to the opinions of the different orators. The speaker at length rose, as if to put the question; then beckoning to Harrison, who sat opposite him, he stood up calmly, and, as that officer approached him—"Now is the time!" he said; "now I must do it!" and forthwith he put off his hat, and began speaking in a mild tone, and more to the point than usual in his harangues, expressing his disapprobation, although moderately and in measured terms, of the motion before the house.

But gradually, as he kindled with his subject, his speech became more vehement and fiery; his words rolled forth in one unbroken stream of bitter and severe invective, scorching and blighting as the electric flash; his features were inflamed and writhed with tremendous passion; his eyes lightened; and his whole frame expanded with a most perfect majesty of wrathful indignation. He rebuked them for their self-seeking and profaneness; their oftentimes denial of true justice; their oppression, their inordinate and selfish love of power; their neglect of the brave and honest army; their idolizing

of the lawyers; their trampling under foot the valiant men who had bled for them in the field; their tampering with the false and time-serving Presbyterians.

"And for what," he cried, with loud and vehement tones, "for what all this? What but to perpetuate your own ill-gotten power, to replenish your own empty purses, empty through riot, and debauchery, and bribery, and every kind of ill which it befits not *you* to perpetrate—and which it were to *me* degrading even to mention or to think of! But now, I say," he went on, stamping fiercely on the ground, "your time hath come! The Lord he hath disowned you! The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob hath done with you! He hath no need of you any more! Lo, he hath judged you, and cast you forth, and chosen fitter instruments to him, to execute that work in which you have dishonored him—"

"Order!" exclaimed one of the bolder of the members; "order! I rise to order. Never have I heard any language so unparliamentary, so insolent—the rather that it cometh from our own servant—one whom we have too fondly cherished—one whom, by raising to this unprecedented and undue elevation, we have endued with the daring and the power thus to brave us!"

For a few moments, Cromwell glared on the bold speaker, as though astonishment at the excess of his audacity had robbed him of the faculty of speech; then casting his hat on his disordered locks, he pulled it doggedly down upon his brows, and with a stamp that made the whole house echo, advancing on the gentleman who was yet speaking—"Come, sir," he said, in a low hissing voice through his set teeth, griping the while his dagger's hilt as though he would have stabbed him on the spot, "come, come, sir, I will put an end to your loud prating!"

Then turning his back suddenly on him whom he addressed, he paced to and fro the hall, his whole face black with the blood which rushed to it as violently as though it would have burst from every pore and vein; his broad breast panting and heaving with emotion; and his entire aspect displaying the most ungovernable and tremendous passions—"You are no parliament, I say," he shouted at

the pitch of his stentorian voice—"you are no parliament! Ho! bring them in!—without there!—bring them in!"

There was a sudden pause; a moment of unutterable terror. For such was the expression painted upon the faces of the craven members of the long parliament. When, years before, a king had dared to violate, in a far less degree, the privileges of that high assemblage, their own undaunted valor, fired by a sense of right; a proud uncompromising feeling of their own inborn worth; had well-nigh armed those patriots—for such *they* were—to battle with such weapons as chance afforded them against the licensed cut-throats of the sovereign. But, as the door flew open, and Colonel Worseley entered with a guard of twenty musketeers, blank and base apprehension sat on the pallid brows of three-fourths of those present; nor did one man of the whole number offer to make the least resistance, to draw a sword, to raise a hand, or even to exchange a look with the strange person who, from so lately being their servant, or, at best, their equal, had thus, by one bold effort, rendered himself their master—their unquestioned, undisputed master!

"This is not honest!" cried Sir Henry Vane, at length, when he had rallied from the first surprise. "It is against morality and common honesty!".

Words cannot picture, language of man cannot describe the change that flashed across the speaking lineaments of Oliver. An instant; a short instant only, ere Vane addressed him, all had been violent and active fury, lashed, as it were, by its own goadings into a state purely animal and uncontrollable. Now the fierce glare of anger instantly subsided, leaving the face, for the moment, passionless and vacant as an infant's; but, ere there was time—not for words, but for thought—the deepest sneer of scorn, of loathing, and unutterable, undisguised contempt succeeded.

"Sir Harry Vane!" he replied, in a low stern whisper, which drove the blood back curdling through the veins of him on whose mind he had pounced, eagle-like, with avenging talons—"Oh, Sir Harry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane! Honesty, and Sir Harry Vane! Morality, and Harry Vane!—who, if he so had

pleased, might have prevented this!—who is a juggler—a mere hypocrite—and hath not common *honesty himself!* A parliament!—I do profess, a precious parliament!—of drunkards!—knaves!—extortioners!—adulterers! Lo, there," he added, pointing to Challoner "there sits a noted wine-bibber—a very glutton and a drunkard! There!" casting his eyes toward Henry Marten and Sir Peter Wentworth, "there two most foul adulterers!"

Then turning on his heel, as if he had already said enough, he waved his hand toward the soldiers, and in a voice as quiet and unruffled as if he had not been in anywise excited, commanded them to clear the house!

"I," exclaimed Lenthall, boldly—for, seeing that no violence was offered, he had recovered his scared spirits—"*I* am the speaker of this house, lawfully by its members chosen, and, save by vote of those same members or by actual force, I never will quit its precincts while in life."

Then Harrison stepped slowly up the body of the long hall to the chair, attended by two musketeers; he laid his hand on Lenthall's shoulder, and prayed him to descend; and, without farther words, he came down from his seat, and putting on his hat, departed from the house all crest-fallen and astounded. Algernon Sidney followed him at once, though with a statelier mien and bolder bearing, eighty more of the members moving with him toward the door. While there had seemed to be the slightest chance of any opposition to his will, Cromwell had stood in silence, with his arms folded on his breast, facing the speaker's chair, with a dark scowl upon his brow and his lips rigidly compressed; but now, when he perceived that all, without more words, were skulking away from the house, he once again addressed them. "It is you," he exclaimed, "it is you who have thrust this on me. Night and day have I prayed the Lord that he would slay me, rather than put me on the doing of this work."

"Then wherefore do it," asken Allen, bluntly, ere he left the house, "if that it be so grievous to you? There is yet time enough to undo that which is already done—and, as your conscience tells you, *ill* done, my Lord of Cromwell!"

"Conscience! Ha! conscience! Alderman," retorted

Oliver, "and what did *thine* tell *thee* when thou, as treasurer of the army, didst embezzle much more than one hundred thousand pounds to thine own uses? What sayest thou to that, good alderman! Ho! ho! methinks I have thee there. Guards, apprehend this peculator! Away with him! away with him! I say"—and he stamped angrily upon the floor as to enforce his words—"until he answers for his deep misdoings!"

Sullen, humiliated, and unpitied, for they had lost already the respect of honest men of all denominations, the members of that parliament, which had dethroned and slain a powerful monarch, destroyed the constitution, and disenthralled the people of a mighty nation, vanquished all foreign foes, and raised their country from a secondary to a first rate power in Europe, now sneaked away to find a miserable refuge in the despised obscurity of private life, deserted by the people in their turn, whom they had first deserted at the dictates of a depraved and poor ambition.

When all had gone forth from the hall, the worker of this mighty revolution fixed his eyes on the mace which lay upon the board before the speaker's chair—"What shall we do," he said, "with this fool's bawble? Here, carry it away!"

And, at the word, a private of the guard bore off that ancient emblem of the people's delegated power, on which, not to preserve his life, Charles Stuart would have dared lay a finger of offense, at the first bidding of the simple citizen of a small English borough, raised by his own strange sagacity and the interminable firmness of his single will to a far loftier station than the proudest despotism of the East.

He snatched the instrument of dissolution from the trembling fingers of the clerk; ordered the great doors to be locked; and, girt by his devoted guard, returned to his own palace at Whitehall, in all, save name, a king. The same day saw the dissolution of the council; and, ere the members were forgotten, little time as elapsed before they were so, the army and the navy sent their addresses up to the lord-general, declaring that they were content to live or die in the support of these his measures;

and every corner of the island resounded with the loud hymns of the fanatics, exulting that "the great and long-desired reformation was now near the birth! Blessing the God of Heaven, who had called Cromwell forth and led him on, not only in the high places of the field, but also, among those mighty ones whom God hath left, to the dissolving of the late parliament!"—rejoicing that the fifth monarchy, the kingdom of Messiah was at hand, and that the promised reign, the grand millennium of the saints, was now to be established in the renovated commonwealth.

And he, the self-deceiver, the fool of fancied destiny, waked through the watches of the night to seek the Lord in prayer; to read the oracles of the fates in the unquiet workings of his own restless spirit; to detect, in the success of his ambitious projects, projects unknown or disguised to his inmost soul, the wonderful fulfillment of the prophecies of old; to cry aloud in the dark solitude of his nocturnal chamber, "True! true! It *was* true that the spirit thundered at midnight in mine ears! Lo! the accomplishment is here! Am I not—am I not the first in England—though I be not *as yet* called king?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE LATIN SECRETARY.

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year
Or man or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defense, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.

MILTON'S *Sonnets.*

In the old parlor, still decorated, although years had flown, with the same faded hangings, more faded now, of dark green serge, before his desk of ebony, and near a sea-coal fire, which threw a brilliant, care-dispelling light upon the features still comely and unwrinkled, upon the soft hair scarcely streaked with any tinge of gray, and the bright eye still clear and vivid as though it were not robbed of its intelligence, sat that far greater and more holy poet, who, as himself has told us, did not

"Sometimes forget
Those other two, equalled with *him* in fate,
So were *he* equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mœonides;"

but to whose blameless spirit, fraught as it was with knowledge of his own mighty genius, it was not given to know that he should no less supersede in fame, in immortality of praise, the objects of his emulation, than he exceeded them in the solemnity, the fervor, and the cultivation of his unrivalled intellect.

He sat not now, however, as before, alone; for two young females, not, perhaps, to speak strictly, beautiful, but still attractive, and bearing in their pale features undoubted tokens of nature's richest dower, high intellect, were seated in the same small apartment. One, placed

before the organ, had just ceased drawing from its vocal tubes that flood of rich religious harmony which ever was the strongest source of inspiration to the soul of her benighted parent. The other, who had just received a packet from a servitor, who was now passing from the parlor, was in the act of opening it, speaking the while in a voice which, though more feminine, and, at the same time, very similar in its peculiar sweetness, was still less musically soft than her father's tones of unmixed melody.

"If I err not," she said, "this should be from the hand of your much valued friend, Sir Edgar Arden."

"Indeed! is it, indeed?" cried Milton, eagerly. "Dear, spirit-wounded friend—fain would I hear of him. Quick! quick, my girl. Truly my soul thirsts for his tidings, as thirsts the panting hart for the cool water-brooks! Is it a foreign letter?"

"Not foreign, sir," she answered, "but surely from your friend. It hath for date—'The commonwealth's ship Jael, now off Spithead, June 29.' I will proceed to show you the contents;" and, without farther words, she read it out in a clear, fluent voice, her father listening all the time with a most earnest and unwavering attention depicted on his pregnant and expressive features. "How shall I offer to console you, my most honored and beloved friend," thus ran the letter, "under the grievous dispensation with which it has seemed good to HIM who cannot err, to make yet farther trial of your excellence. If I should set down aught, it would but be, I know, as weak and whispering sounds when brought beside the powerful and all-assuaging harmonies which your own tutored mind, mature in wisdom, and superior no less in fervid piety to mine than in the gifts of science, hath poured forth, in a never-ceasing stream, to lull the pains and minister to the repinings of the flesh. Condolence, therefore, I nor offer—nor would you, I think, receive. Nothing except a conscience such as yours can bear the body up beneath so sad a deprivation—and such a one *can* do much more, and *doth*. Moreover, if in such circumstance anything can be termed happy, happy it is that your enjoyments are for the most part of that spiritual and internal nature, which change of day or night—of noontide

splendor or of everlasting darkness—can nothing take away nor yet deteriorate. Truly you have laid up for yourself treasures 'where the moth and the rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.' I have read through your task, in leisure moments of my perilous and weary watches—your defense of the English people—and IT IS A DEFENSE! If you had written never anything before, this should prove you both patriot and poet—should win you what, I fancy, you, no more than I, esteem at an inordinate or priceless value—the vain world's voice of praise—and greater far than this, the approbation of all good and wise men now, and the eternal reverence and gratitude of ages that shall be hereafter. But of this enough! No words of mine, alas! can remedy or soothe those griefs, if there be any, which your own high philosophy have not removed already—and, to assure you of my real sympathy, they are, I know, even more needless. Of that you can want no assurance. I would that we could hold more intimate communion—for I have many things to say to you which I love not to trust to paper—the rather that that paper *must* now pass under eyes not yours, before its sense can be transmitted to your ears. But since we cannot converse freely face to face, as in more happy days of old—days which, to both of us, are now but a delightful memory of things that never can return—why, we must even interchange our sentiments as best we may; setting down what we may in prudence and with safety, and supplying—each from his own knowledge of the others' wonted train of thought and feeling—that which must be omitted. This, for my own part, I will entreat you to essay to do, bearing in mind the last important conversation which took place between us—with my own fears concerning things and persons of no small weight in England, and your assurances that those my fears were fruitless and ill-grounded. We have learned, here in the fleet, but a few months ago, how the lord-general hath dissolved the parliament by actual and armed violence; and now we farther hear that he doth exercise in person all the prerogatives and duties of an absolute, uncontrolled monarch; making, at his own pleasure, peace and war; signing and ratifying treaties with

foreign potentates; excluding or admitting whom he will to the great council of the nation; bearing himself, in short, as if he were legitimately and of right the master of the liberties and lives of freeborn, but, alas! no more free, Englishmen. I may not here disguise from you that, shortly after the intelligence of his first usurpation—for such I, for one, hold the dissolution of the parliament, as I may say at the pike's point, how worthless or inadequate soever it might be—a general council held by delegates from every vessel of our victorious fleet voted an address to the general, approving of the measure which I reprobate, and promising to live or die in his support. Nor, I imagine, have I any need to state to you, that neither I, nor a far more important person, to wit, our great commander, Blake, had any share or portion in this vote or address—both of us, for the time, holding ourselves content to do our duty to our country against her foreign foes, whatever the complexion of her internal policy. The flag of England must not float less superbly now than when it overcanopied the crowns of our immortal sovereigns of old. But now I will entreat you, ere I lay down my pen—which I must do somewhat the more in haste that the last signal from our admiral is to weigh anchor and stand out to sea in chase of a Dutch squadron—to inform me at your leisure of the more intricate and hidden motives of late matters in the state. Whether this man hath indeed, by his own daring only, and at the prompting of insatiate ambition, compassed an usurpation so beyond all exception flagrant and audacious, that I comprehend not how even his sagacity can cloak it in the eyes of men with a fair semblance—or whether the times be indeed so much out of joint, that these most marvellous aggressions on the privileges and the liberty of parliament can be in anywise required or justified on grounds of hindering greater anarchy and detriment to England, than shall arise from this invasion of time-honored usages. Our anchor is apeak already; and some of our light brigantines, having slipped their cables, are, as we well believe—for we may hear their cannon, although it is so hazy that we can see scarce a league to seaward—even now engaged with Van Tromp's rearmost vessels. I send

this with the pilot, who shall despatch it by express to London. I pray you once again write to me, as to one secluded from intelligence of all those things which are most dear to him. We shall, 't is very like, put back to Portsmouth after action, should it seem fit to the great Moderator of the universe to grant us victory, to which our endeavors shall be in nowise wanting. To Him I now commend you. Valeas, igitur, haud immemor observantissimi tui,

"EDGAR ARDEN."

Several times during the space occupied by the recitation of this letter had Milton interrupted it by comments to his gentle secretaries on its style, its language, and, above all, the noble sentiments which breathed in every line of it. At moments he was affected almost to the point of tears, and again, at others, a bright benignant smile would kindle his whole aspect into sunny animation. After his daughter had ceased reading, "Kind heart," he said—"kind heart, and generous as kind. We must forthwith reply to him. He knoweth not, moreover, how dear and intimate a secretary and attendant is vouchsafed to us in our diurnal gloom. Hast thou thy vellum ready, girl, and pens? I will dictate forthwith, for lo! his letter hath been long delayed upon its route, and he hath anxiously, I doubt not, looked for an answer to his queries." Having received an affirmative reply from her, who had been playing on the organ, and who now placed herself beside him at the desk, he commenced dictating in his wonted voice of slow and silvery music.

"TO THE MOST NOBLE GENTLEMAN, THE MUCH ESTEEMED SIR EDGAR ARDEN:

"The letter which you sent to me, my true and honored friend, addressed from Spithead hither, previously to the renowned and memorable victory of July, wherein not only was the indefeasible and ancient rightof England to be the queen and mistress of the ocean waves permanently and triumphantly established by the tried arms of our stout seamen, but that most brave and dangerous foe —during whose lifetime never had the sturdy Hollanders

yielded to us the palm—Van Tromp, was laid at rest from troubling us now any more—hath but now reached me, although frore winter is already treading hard on the retiring footsteps of his more lusty predecessor. Grateful, indeed, and pleasing to my spirit are the kind sympathizings which you have therein displayed with my infirmities—great, truly, is the loss of light—the shutting out of wisdom from one of its most easy and familiar entrances—the quenching of the finest, the most delicate, and subtile of the senses. But surely, under this affliction, mighty and manifold-all glory be to Him who to the shorn lamb tempereth the wind—are still my consolations, and—truly I can use the word in its full sense—my joys! First, do I feel this proud conviction, that, ere mine eyes were sealed in night, they had performed their task, not negligently, nor with a niggard and reluctant labor, but with such ample execution, such overflowing measure of success, that not alone the cause which I have labored to uphold, even to the self-sacrifice of God's first gift of light, hath been admitted true in every land of Christendom, and I, its author, robed in a vestment of such high repute as might compensate for any loss less grievous; but, more, the ill-advised and senseless wretch who dared to strive against me in the arena of the schools hath paid for his temerity, not only by the utter deprivation of all renown which might before have been conceded him, but by his own decease—perishing of the rankling hatred and mean jealousy which follows ever on defeat, when sustained by a poor, base spirit. These things, then, are to me a great and wondrous consolation—first, that I, in my degree, have done my duty to my beloved country—secondly, that to her the sacrifice hath not been profitless nor the devotion unacceptable—and, thirdly, that to me it hath brought that best boon of the world's giving—that boon to pant for which is, of a truth, 'the last infirmity of noble minds'—a high, and, though myself I say it, not an unmerited renown. Nor fancy, my kind friend, that, in my blindness, I am deserted quite and robbed of natural enjoyments—no! by the gracious mercy of that Lord who never casts us into peril, or temptation, or adversity, but likewise he finds for us a way of escape from the same; I

am so piously attended by the affectionate and loving cares of my two daughters, my organists, my secretaries, nurses, and companions, that less acutely do I feel the greatness of my loss than it were easy for you to imagine. Besides, long since have I looked forward to this consummation of my daily and nocturnal labors, as to a certain unavoidable result—and poor, indeed, were the resources and the energies of him who, having long foreseen a coming evil, should lack the power to reconcile himself to its endurance, when it seemed good unto the Lord to send it in his own appointed time.

"Now, with regard to what you say touching the difficulty or the danger of intimate communion between us by espistle—relieve yourself from any terror—it is a child's tongue which conveys the sense of all the letters he receives to her blind parent's ear—it is a child's hand which commits to writing each syllable that flows from her blind parent's mouth. Wherefore, whatever you would say to me, write now, and ever, with all fearlessness and freedom, as I will answer to your queries. Surely the matters which have caused so much of grieving and anxiety to your most noble mind, have likewise been a stumbling-block to many. Needful it was for England's weal, for her salvation I might say, that the self-seeking, carnal-minded junto—who arrogated to themselves the rights and titles of a parliament, and who, having once liberated, were now striving to enslave their country—should be cast forth from the high places of their usurpation. And by whom could they be cast forth save by the excellent and most wise person whom I am grieved to see that you do still mistrust? Deeply, most deeply was he moved; and fervently, with tears and prayers continually, and supplications earnest and importunate, did he beseech the Ruler of all mortal councils that this cup should pass from him; but it might not be granted. Truly, had Cromwell been ambitious, would he at once have yielded up the power which he for a short time assumed, to a new chosen parliament, assembled at the earliest? Truly, had he so willed, he might have then been king—but no! he labored for his country's weal, and he has won it. And again, if he be now protector of the land, wielding the

sword of execution, and weighing with the balances of justice—I pray you, how was he so eminently raised above his fellows? Did he so elevate himself, carving his way through patriotic opposition to that thorny seat of power? Doth he sit now upon unruly and unwilling necks of subjugated and rebellious citizens? Oh no! But by the resignation of the free elected parliament, which succeeded that base remnant over whose fall not one man shed a tear in England, of all their delegated powers—powers which they soon learned they could not profitably wield, into the hands of him whom they saw—and saw truly—to be the only person capable of holding England's helm aright amid the turbulent and stormy seas of foreign warfare and domestic anarchy. Remember you how we discoursed one time touching the possibility of the existence of republics? And how I, dazzled by the immortal glare of classic stories, caught by the light which I then deemed a star—a living star of glory—but now have ascertained to be a false, delusive meteor, how I contended that, as Rome and Greece were free and mighty once, so England should be likewise, when modelled to a form of pure democracy? Do you remember this—and your own arguments against me? Now, I confess it, you have conquered—and I, wise as I held myself, was groping like a benighted traveller amid the ruined labyrinths and fallen shrines of false divinities. Truly there is *no* tyranny like to the tyranny of multitudes. Till the majority of men shall be, as you then said, wise and unselfish, virtuous, honest, and enlightened, till then it is in vain to hope for good from any government administered by that majority—that hundred-headed, fickle-willed, false-hearted monster, which is called the people.

"England was tottering on the brink of ruin in the years that preceded the all-glorious 1649, and Oliver stepped in and rescued her from lying the dishonorable victim of *one* tyrant. England again was falling headlong, headlong into an abyss of anarchy and vice, and misery and folly, and now again has the same guardian of his country, the same great Oliver, stepped in, and saved her from becoming the most miserable slave and harlot of *ten millions*, fiercer each one and more tyrannical than

he who paid the forfeit of his crimes upon the scaffold of Whitehall. Never, in any former day, were all men's liberties so well defined, so jealously secured, so strictly and so punctually guarded, as they now are; never was justice yet so equally administered without respect of persons or estates. Each man of England can, indeed, sit now under his own vine and his own fig-tree, fearless, content, and free. Happy, and virtuous, and rich at home, honored and feared abroad, succoring the oppressed in every foreign clime, riding the ocean in secure and undisputed mastery, shielding her sons, in whatsoever quarter of the wide world they may be wandering, by the mere shadow of her name. This is the lot of England now. When was it so before? And now that it has once been won for her, won by her Great Protector, who shall e'er wrest it from her? when shall it cease to be? But I grow warm, enthusiastical, as who would not, that knows him as he should be known, in praise of this most wondrous man? I have a boon to ask of you, a boon which I beseech you, by the memory of those pleasant days when we two wandered by the classic waters of the Tiber and Ilissus, when we two mused among the ruins of the Coliseum and the palace-tombs of the dead Cæsars, grant to me. It is the first I ever asked of you, and you will not refuse it. Peace is concluded with the sturdy Hollanders; our fleets may float from the white cliffs of Albion beyond the pillars of the Grecian hero, beyond the far Symplegades, beyond the islands of the blessed, over the vanished Atalantis, even to the free forest shores of that great western land named of our virgin queen, and find no flag to brave them. Sheath, then, your sword. England hath need of you at home. Return, return, and you shall own me right in my opinion and Cromwell clear in his great office; else will I be content that you shall call me no longer

"Your most affectionate friend and admirer,

"JOHN MILTON.

"WESTMINSTER, *this 14th day of January*, 1654."

CHAPTER V.

THE PERPETUAL PROTECTOR.

"A more than earthly crown
The dictatorial wreath."

He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.
Childe Harold.

It was the evening of the twenty-sixth of June, some five years later than the date of Milton's letter, urging upon Sir Edgar Arden the propriety of his return to England; yet, since he had dictated it, the poet had received no line or token from his friend.

After the peace which closed the long and hard-fought struggle with the Hollanders, and decided the supremacy of England on the seas, throwing up his commission, Arden had left the navy; nor, since that day, had any tidings been received of one who had, a little time before, so occupied the general mouth, and played a part so eminent in that great drama—the World's History.

Such is renown!—such popular applause!—such human gratitude! The man who had preserved the life of Oliver on Winsley field; who had secured his victory on Marston Moor; who had, to the abandonment of all that could have rendered his own life happy, labored as the most strenuous and faithful of that great being's followers, so long as he believed him true to England and to himself; who, with a yet harder sacrifice, quitted his side the very moment he perceived the dawning symptoms of ambition in one whom he had loved and honored—as men but rarely love and honor. This man was now forgotten; forgotten by the land for which he had so deeply suffered; forgotten by the friend he had so deeply served.

The past anniversary of this day had been a day of

splendor and rejoicing, the night had been one of joy, festivity, and mirth. From every steeple in the huge metropolis the merry bells had chimed with their most jovial notes, from park and tower the loud voice of the cannon thundered in noisy concert; from every casement tapers, and lamps, and torches sent forth unwonted radiance; and from each court and square huge bonfires streamed heavenward, while by their light the multitude sat feasting and carousing, to the health of the Protector. The past anniversary of this day had witnessed the superb and solemn ceremonial of his installation to that office which he had filled with so much dignity and honor to himself, with so much profit and advancement to his country, during the four preceding years. With all the glorious preparation, the pride, and pomp, and circumstance which deck the coronation of a monarch, with proclamation of the kings-at-arms, and homage of bareheaded lords, and acclamations of the multitude, and addresses from the delegates of foreign potentates, Oliver had been decorated with a robe of purple more splendidly elaborate than the attire of any former king; he had been girded with the rich sword of state; he had received a sceptre, massive with solid gold, with which to sway the destinies of England; a noble copy of the Holy Writ, whereby to wield that sceptre rightly. Generals had borne his train; the parliament had sanctioned his investiture as performed by its speaker; the people had assented! In all but name, that "feather in the hat," which adds not anything to him who wears it; that "toy and bawble," which he had oftentimes rejected, partly in politic accordance to the prejudices of his more fanatical advisers, partly in superstitious, although unconfessed, obedience to the prophetic voice which had forewarned him of his coming greatness; in all but name, the citizen of Huntingdon was now the KING OF ENGLAND.

Great, powerful, triumphant, unresisted. His every project splendidly successful. His every wish fulfilled. His love of glory, thirst of power, ambition to be FIRST, all satisfied, if not, indeed, insatiate. His boast, that he would make the name of Englishman as potent and as far revered as ever was the style of antique Roman, was com-

pleted to the letter. The country, which he governed, was raised from the deepest degradation to the loftiest fame. His navies were irresistible, his armies everywhere victorious, his alliance courted, and his enmity most humbly deprecated by dynasties which, but one century before, and that, too, when the most mighty of her former sovereigns, the manly-minded virgin queen, had filled her throne—regarded England as a mere speck on the bosom of the sea; hard, it is true, of access, and difficult to conquer; but powerless abroad, and exercising scarce a shadow either of influence or power among the mightier royalties of Europe. Was Cromwell happy?

In a high chamber of his more than royal residence, while all without was rife with demonstrations of respect for his affeered and legal dignity, Oliver sat alone. Sumptuously, though still plainly clad, in an entire suit of sable velvet, the jewelled sword of state which had been, on that same day of the foregoing year, buckled to his side, lying upon the board before him, and bearing in his altered mien, altered most strangely, and adapted to his altered station, that grave, majestic dignity which had replaced the bluntness of his soldier-bearing, musing in solitude and silence, the greatest man in England passed the first anniversary of his assured and titled greatness.

There was, however, now no glow of exultation on that pale cheek and careworn brow, no curl of triumph on the lip, no flash of gratified ambition in the downcast eye. Lines deeper and sterner than the wrinkles of advancing age were seared into that massive forehead; a shadow gloomy and sad had veiled that hollow eye; exhaustion, weariness of heart, sickness of spirit, were written visibly in the pale caverns of that haggard cheek.

There was a trifling sound, a casual rustling in the large apartment, a thousand such as which each hour brings to unsuspicious ears; he started to his feet—he thrust his hand into his bosom. He bent a searching and disquiet eye into each corner of the room, which was so strongly lighted that not a shadow could be seen in its most distant angle. He listened as the condemned prisoner listens for the foot of the law's last minister. The sound came not again, and he resumed his seat; but, as he did so, a

sharp and jingling clash told that beneath the civic garb there lurked a shirt of steel; and the light glittered on the butt of a concealed pistol, just rendered visible by the derangement of his doublet. The soldier of a hundred fields, the vanquisher and scorner of a thousand perils, he who had ridden to the fray as to the banquet, he who had stood all dauntless and unflinching among a storm of bullets, that mowed down all around him, wore hidden armor, shook at an empty sound. A pile of papers lay before him on the table, threats from anonymous assassins, hints from concealed and faithful spies, dwellers at every court in Europe, despatches intercepted, private correspondence opened and searched, and, on the top of all, a pamphlet, fresh from the press, with the leaves partly cut, and a broad-bladed dagger, which he had used to open them, lying upon it, as if to mark the place. It bore the ominous and fearful title, KILLING NO MURDER!

After a long pause, during which, though seated, he still watched with an acute and anxious ear for a recurrence of the sound that had disturbed him, he again took up the pamphlet, and with a painful and intense fixedness of study, that marked the harrowing interest he took in its minutest arguments, perused its closely-printed pages. Midnight had long passed ere he had finished it; with a deep sigh he closed and laid it down again; a sigh not of regret, but of relieved suspense, such as men heave when the catastrophe of some exciting tragedy is over.

"The villain!" he exclaimed; "the perilous and subtle villain! Damnable arguments! Accursed perversion of the talents and the intellect, which God giveth unto man for good." He rose, and paced the apartment to and fro, with steps now faltering and slow, now hurried, short, and rapid! "'And my own muster-roll'—he says—'contains the names of those who burn to emulate the glory of the younger Brutus—who do aspire to the honor of delivering their country'—and by what—what but my secret murder?"—his brow became more gloomy than before; and yet again, after a little space, it kindled with its ancient animation. "A lie!" he cried, aloud, and in a tone of triumph; "I do believe, a lie!—a wicked and malignant lie! framed but to break my rest! It cannot be, it can-

not, that my brave fellows, my own ironsides, my followers in a hundred battles, can be but true and loyal! and yet," he went on, the momentary gleam of spirit fading, "and yet it doth crave wary walking!—ay! and, as Milton would say in his classic tongue, *fas est et ab hoste doceri!* But I will watch—yea! watch with my sword drawn and my light burning. Surely the Lord of Hosts will shield his servant from the midnight dagger as from the open-smiting sword. I will trust no man.—No! not one! Harrison hath looked cold on me of late, and prated much of Ehud and of Saul. And Fleetwood thwarts me. Hacker, who was my friend, is now my bitter foe. And they have dared to liken me to Ahab, and to cry 'Ha! ha! Hast thou slain, and dost thou take possession?' And Ormond hath come over, as I learn to-day—another Syndercombe and Sexby business. The snares are set—are set, I say, on every side!—pitfalls are digged for my feet, and arrows whetted privily against me! And wherefore? They cannot say that I have wronged one man in England—that I have wrung one penny from their purses, or shed one drop of blood, save in due course of law. They cannot charge me with bloodthirstiness, for I have been long-suffering and merciful—ay! even to a fault!—but I will be so no longer—Slingsby must come to trial, ay, and Hewit—and, if condemned, as the Lord liveth, they shall die! die as murderers and common stabbers! They cannot say that England is not free, and powerful, and happy as never she was heretofore; and yet they hate me. Ay, and take counsel for my death!—and poison all hearts, even of my own friends, against me! 'and I shall perish,' this base fellow prophesieth, 'like dung from off the earth—and they that look upon my greatness shall ask of me, Where is he?'"

He paused in his distempered walk, and, falling on his knees, burst into a passion of loud sobs and tears—"My God," he cried, "my God, why hast thou thus forsaken me? Oh yield not up thy servant to the power of the ungodly, nor suffer the blasphemers to prevail against him. For surely it is thou, thou, Lord, who hast thrust on me this undesired greatness; who hast compelled me, though reluctant and rebellious, to wear these trappings

of authority, when, as thou knowest, even *thou*, who knowest all things, far rather I had dwelt by a woodside and tended sheep, than been the ruler of this stiff-necked and ungrateful generation. But thou hast done this violence to my affections, thou hast disposed of thy servant for the best in thine own sight, as from the beginning it was written down. Yea! thou didst send thy minister to warn him of thy pleasure when but a child, foolish and unregenerate, and a slave to sin. Thou didst redeem him from the power of Satan, and sure he was in grace; and he that is in thy grace once can never more relapse. Lo! by my hand thou didst strike down the man Charles Stuart, putting it nightly and by day into my soul, 'thou shalt not suffer him to live'—and thou hast set me up, not for my own pleasure nor at my request, but at thine own singular especial choice, for the advancement of thy cause, the welfare and the safety of thy church. And thou hast made me, as thou promisedst of yore, though not a king, THE FIRST IN ENGLAND! And yet thou dost abandon now thy servant; thou dost yield up thy true and faithful one, who, for thy cause, hath yielded up his all, to the delusions of the enemy—the power of the Evil One! I ask not, is this merciful?—but is this just, O Lord? Thou knowest well how I have served thee, neither grudgingly nor with eye service, but in all purity and truth of spirit; and now, even now, Lord, when thou hast, as it seems, forgotten me, I turn to thee alone for aid, to thee for succor and for justice! Let me not perish utterly; let not my blood, which has flowed ever at thy bidding freely, be spilled by a base stabber. Let me not be cast forth from the high place whereon thou hast seated me, as a thing worthless and despised; but let me die, when thou hast done with me, in fullness of my fame, either upon my deathbed, thence passing peaceably into thy presence, or gallantly upon my charger's back amid the blast of trumpets—"

A step was heard without, a low tap at the door; instantly he rose from his knee, holding the bible, which he had opened as he commenced his wild and almost impious prayer, in one hand, while with the other he grasped the hilt of the short massy sword beside him—"Enter!"

he said, in a stern, calm voice; and, at the word, one of his body-guards stepped in, announcing that a stranger was below, craving to speak privately on matters of great import with his highness.

"What like is he?" Oliver asked, sharply—"a stranger, ha! Is he a tall, pale man, with a deep scar on his right cheek; a mantle of blue broadcloth with a red cape, a slouched hat and red feather?"

"Even so, please your highness," replied the soldier.

"And doth he wear his right hand gloved, resting upon the hilt of a long tuck, and three rings on the fingers of his left?"

"Of a truth I observed not," the messenger began.

"Begone, then, instantly; demand his name—not that it matters—but mark his hands, I tell thee—they should be as I tell thee. On the forefinger of the left a plain gold hoop, and a large seal ring of cornelian, with a small guard of jet upon the second. If it be so, say to him I will go now no farther in that matter, but will send one to confer with him at three hours past noon to-morrow, at the place which he wots of.

"If it be *not* as I say to you, secure him on the peril of your life, and have him away forthwith to the Gatehouse. But in neither case trouble me any more this night. Begone!" and, as the soldier left the room, he muttered something to himself inaudibly, drew out no fewer than three pistols from different parts of his attire, looked closely to the flints and priming, extinguished all the lights save one, locked, double locked, and barred the outer door; then raised the tapestry in a corner of the room, opened a panel in the wainscoting, and, gliding through it into a devious passage in the thickness of the wall, stole like a guilty thing to a remote bedchamber, different from that in which he had slept the preceding night, known only to one old and trusted servitor.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE MAN.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favorites—early death.

CHILDE HAROLD.

THE power, the wealth, and the prosperity of England daily and almost hourly increased. The ravages of war had long since disappeared from her deep velvet pastures and her happy homes. Every religion was endured except when its professors intermeddled in state matters; all parties, whether cavalier, or Presbyterian, or fifth-monarchist, shared equally the law's protection, alike relied on the protector's evenhanded justice. The arts and sciences were more encouraged; learned and polished scholars were esteemed at the court of Oliver in higher and more just repute; morality was more rewarded, licentiousness and vice more frowned down, than ever they had been before.

Nor, though the court was rigid almost to excess in morals, was its decorum chilled by any touch of jealous, puritanical moroseness. All innocent amusements were admitted and enjoyed freely, Cromwell himself keeping a stud of race-horses, and laboring to promote in all things lawful, not the mere welfare, but the happiness and comfort of his meanest subject. No Christian sect was hindered in its worship or observances; even the trampled and scorned Israelite finding an advocate and friend in that great man, who went so infinitely far in toleration, beyond, not his own age alone, but the most liberal usages of the most tolerant of modern nations.

Still did *his* cares, his griefs, and his perplexities but multiply. No success was enough to please, no general prosperity enough to satiate, the people; craving eternally the something new; losing the tangible realities of present in the dim longings after future happiness; forgetting

benefits conferred; ungrateful for past merits; light-headed, fickle, and false-hearted. Day after day new plots broke out; and though they burst all harmlessly—the veteran bearing still, as it would seem, a charmed life—every detected scheme, punished or pardoned, left its deep sting behind.

Cromwell's existence was no longer healthful; his spirit was no longer, as of yore, elastic and storm-riding as the eagle's pinion. His days were spent in bitter, because thankless, labors; his nights in agonizing apprehensions. It was not that he trembled; it was not that a vile and dastard fear of death shook his soul from its eminence; it was not that he would have doubted any more to hurl himself in open strife upon the deadliest hazard now, when the monarch of the land, than when he fought, a simple colonel of the ironsides, a cause of dread to others, himself dreading nothing. But it was the suspense, the doubt, the inability to harbor trust or confidence in any of those nearest to his person. The gnawing heart-consuming sense of being undervalued, dealt with ungratefully, wronged, hated, and betrayed.

Still in the prime of intellectual manhood, his strong form was bowed and feeble; his hair, once dark as the raven's wing, thin, weak, and gray; his piercing eye downcast and veiled, and his whole aspect that of a man worn out, even by his own success, spiritless and heart-broken.

Parliament after parliament, convoked to settle the provisions of the nation, rebelled against his power, running, as had their predecessors, wild on abtruse religious doctrines, and anxious to plunge all things once more into anarchy, by striving to work out their frantic phantasies of perfect and unchangeable republics.

Each after each he was compelled, not for his own sake merely, but for England's, which else they would assuredly have hurled again into the abyss of civil discord, to break up and dissolve them. Nothing could crush the tameless hardihood with which he bore up, nerved by their very pressure, against burdens to a slighter intellect wholly unbearable; conspiracies of enemies, false-heartedness of friends; treasons and anarchy at home, insults and

wars abroad. All yielded to the active vigor with which he sprang to grapple them, but by that very vigor was his own mighty spirit, like a bow overstrained by too long tension, despoiled of its own strength, its pliability, its power of renewed exertion.

The capture of the rich West Indian isles, the persecutions of the Vaudois, remitted at the first hint of his potential voice, the all-important port of Dunkirk, so long the secret aim of England's politic ambition, ceded to his victorious arms, cast a bright gleam, indeed, on his declining years; but it was like the last gleam of the wintry sunshine, that gilds, but leaves no impress of its glory on the snow-mantled earth.

A nearer sorrow, a more domestic grief, was destined to wear through the last link of the corroding chain, a mere affliction, such as befalls each father of a family many times in a life, and, for the most, leaves but slight traces even on minds less firmly moulded, annihilated the gigantic energies of that great master spirit which had, throughout its mortal course, met nothing that could cope with it, nothing that had not been subdued, enslaved, and overwhelmed by its indomitable will. Elizabeth, his best beloved daughter, a woman of invaluable worth, modest, and delicate, and feminine, and gentle; yet of a character the most decisive, a principle the most undeviating, a permanence and rectitude of purpose the most immovable, and, above all, an influence on her father the most peculiar and impressive, lay wasting on a bed of mortal sickness.

Throughout the whole of his broad realms, those realms wherein the sweet, calm home affections have ever flourished the most greenly, there lived not any father more kind, solicitous, forbearing, and devoted in his paternal love, than the unconquered victor, the merciless avenger, the stern judge, the regicide, the ruler. Hard as he was abroad, cold and unbending in all outward show, in his domestic hours none were more warm than he, more playful, or affectionate.

Thus constituted toward all his children, the dearest to his feelings, as the most prized and valued in his judgment, was Elizabeth, who now consumed by an unnatural and mortal malady, was waning hourly before his eyes.

She was the only one of all his family, the only one of all his friends, save only Edgar Arden, who had dared ever to remonstrate with him during the upward course of his ambition. She had confronted many a time his sophistry with that most sound of all philosophies, the pure creed of the Christian; she had rebuked his zealous and fanatic superstitions with regulated and sincere religion; she had accused him of that restless and insatiate ambition, which she perceived, or fancied she perceived, to be the instigator and the planner, it might be unsuspected even by himself, of all his darker actions.

She had rebuked him during the trial; she had besought him, on her bended knees, before the execution of the king, to spare, not his crowned victim only, but his own deathless fame; his own immortal soul. Her wishes set at naught, her prayers unheeded, she had not once, no, not for one brief moment, complained, or murmured, or revolted.

She had not once reproached him with that which it was now too late to remedy, but she had ever been the soother of his disquiet mind, when fits of his accustomed hypochondriasm had overcome him with remorse, and terror, and visions ominous of woe; she had ever been his calm monitress, inculcating a milder and a holier creed; exhorting him to penitence, as the sole path to pardon and to peace. And it was strange that now, in his most lordly plenitude of power, the two sympathies which he most keenly felt were toward the only two of human beings who had seen through the first, perceived the earliest, and opposed the latest, the most darling objects of his soul.

Abandoned now by all, the leader, revered, but not loved by his followers, the monarch, self-upheld above rebellious subjects, the master, flattered, and courted, and, perhaps, betrayed—he clung with a sharp, painful yearning, as to the only feelings of his heart entirely pure and unmixed with aught worldly, to his affection for Elizabeth and his regret for Arden.

Never, since he had fixed his firm seat on the bloody throne of Charles, had his most cherished daughter been what she was in his more innocent and humbler days. Her smile was as sweet, yet it was now no longer joyous; and

her cheek lost its roses, and her form its roundness; a glassy film veiled her soft eye; and he, the father, saw it, and knew, yet could not reconcile himself to the approaching woe; and felt himself to be, unutterable anguish, the slayer of his chosen child. And seeing, knowing, feeling all this, it was his lot to deal the last blow to her gentle being, to launch the last shaft that should ever rankle in her bosom with the envenomed barbs of mortal sorrow.

Hewit, who, with Sir Henry Slingsby, had, on most positive, unquestionable proof, been condemned for conspiracy against the power and life of Oliver; whom party prejudice cannot deny to have been guilty of the intent to kill; an intent hindered only by premature discovery of their plot; nor the most jealous scrutiny discover to have been otherwise than justly executed; Hewit had been the preacher on whose ministry she had for many years attended; had united her to Claypole by the service of the church; had been her friend, her comforter, her teacher; and, looking on him only in these amiable and endearing lights, Elizabeth forgot to view him as the intended murderer of her father. She had argued in his behalf, half justified his crime under the plea of loyalty to his true king, prayed zealously and piteously for the remission of his punishment, and, finding all her supplications vain, mourned over him with so intense and terrible a storm of grief, that it half overcame her intellect, and quite wore out her frail and fading body.

With a dull apathy Oliver heard at first that her life was despaired of; no sign of sorrow was displayed, scarcely of sense or feeling; but after a short space came the evulsion, the breaking up of all the vain restraints of pride, and stoicism, and man's affected hardihood, the loosing of the floodgates of the soul, the awful, vehement outpourings of a strong man's despair. From that day forth he left not her bedside, neither by day nor yet by night, tending her with all a woman's care, and, more than all, a woman's love. Soothing her every phantasy, feigning to be, or, it may be, persuading himself also that he would be, all she could wish him, praying and weeping with her. Nothing could be more beautiful, more pious, or more touching than the conduct of that gray-haired

usurper, mourning as one that had no hope beyond her grave, beside his daughter's deathbed.

But wretched as the consolation would have been, to have caught on his lips her last expiring sigh, to have felt reflected on his own the last glance of her glazing eyes—that wretched consolation was denied to him; for, as the body of his sweet child wasted, so did her mind wane likewise; and for many days before the termination of her sufferings, she would at times burst into fits of the most frantic and insane delirium.

These, as the time of her decease drew nearer, became more and more vehement and frightful; and it was strange that she, whose pains had ever seemed less bitter, or, at the least, more easily endured when her hand rested in her father's; now, at the sight of him she loved so dearly, nay, at the mere tones of his voice, or his suppressed and cautious footstep, started at once into the most furious paroxysms.

"Blood! blood!" she would shriek, till the whole pile of Hampton court rang with her awful ravings—"I float, I smother in a sea; a sea of human blood! Who comes? who comes? red with the gore of monarchs; red with the slaughter of the saints? Father?—*not* father—no—no—oh, not *my* father!" and then again she would take up the cry, "Blood! blood!" struggling and wrestling on her couch as if amid the weltering waves, till those who watched about her were well-nigh distraught with terror, and till the boldest of her medical attendants, in the most positive terms, insisted on the absence of the despairing father from the sick chamber of his child.

He withdrew silently, and with a quiet patience, that perfectly astonished those acquainted with the imperiousness of Cromwell's will; but he withdrew only from her deathbed to lie down upon his own.

Shattered before by the incessant cares which he for many months had undergone, the whole weight of the government resting upon his single shoulders; relaxed by nervousness, suspicion, superstition, and remorse; this last blow broke him down. His old complaint, the ague, which had attacked him first in Scotland, and shaken, if it had not actually undermined, his constitution, returned

upon him with redoubled violence, and, in a few days, brought him down to the very threshold of that dark house—the grave.

But it was not, in truth, the ailment only of the corporeal shell; it was the intolerable burden "of that perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart!" Had the mind been at ease, the sickness of the body had been of small account. "The sorrows written on the brain were not to be razed out, nor the stuffed bosom cleansed." The scabbard, fretted long ago, was now, at length, worn out by the keen weapon that lay hid within it; the earthen jar was burst by the inscrutable workings of the liquor it contained; the pharos was consumed by the same fire which had for many a year been the sole agent of its glory.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

"The third of the same moon, whose former course
Had all but crowned him, on the self-same day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And showed not fortune thus how fame and sway
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom."

It was already twilight on a sweet August evening, and the streets were fast growing thin, as the many-tongued and busy crowd, that had chafed and fretted throughout the day, like waves, in every channel of the great metropolis, gradually passed away, to seek for relaxation in their peaceful homes from all the cares, anxieties, and sorrows which had increased to them the heat and burden of their daily labors.

A few, however, might be still seen studding in scattered groups the shadowy thoroughfares, some hurrying, as belated men, with hasty footsteps homeward, some loitering aimlessly along, as if to catch the pleasant coolness

of the evening breeze. Among these groups was one, if it could properly be termed so, consisting of two persons; the one a man perhaps a little past the middle age, with soft and pensive features, and long light brown hair, waving in loose and scattered curls over the collar of his plain gray doublet—the other a boy, richly attired, as might beseem the page of a high family, upon whose shoulder the elder person leaned somewhat heavily with his left hand, while with the right he moved a staff of ebony before him, as if to feel his way, for he was blind, although no scrutiny could have discovered any speck or blemish in the clear but cold gray eyes which, seeming to see all things, were, in truth, sealed up in rayless night.

No words were interchanged between the pair as they passed onward to Whitehall at a pace suitable to the infirmity of the chief personage; but, when they reached the palace gate, the page spoke shortly in a low voice to the sentinel on duty, who was engaged in parleying with a gentleman on horseback, of military air and noble bearing, and was already passing in, when suddenly the stranger, who, it seemed, had been refused admittance, cast his eye on the boy's companion, and instantly addressed him.

"Well met, and in good season," he exclaimed; "if my eyes play me not a trick, my excellent friend Milton!" The blind man's countenance flashed with a joyous light as he replied—"Well met, indeed! well met, and welcome, after long years of absence; for sure I am mine ears deceive me not, though it be one whose accents I but little counted should ever greet them more—Sir Edgar Arden!"

"It is indeed!" answered the horseman. "After long years of wandering in the transatlantic wilds, I have at length turned my feet homeward; I landed only three days since at Portsmouth, and, riding with all diligence, have but this hour arrived in London. Right glad am I to see one of the only two persons with whom I have now any ties on earth, so early, and, if I may judge from appearances, so well in health."

"I thank you!" answered the poet, grasping affectionately his friend's hand; "I thank you heartily; by His great mercy, and beside my one infirmity, I am sound, as

I trust, both mind and body. But, tell me—for, in that I see you here, I judge who is the other person with whom you still esteem yourself united—can I do aught for you? I am, you know, *his* secretary?"

"I would, if it were possible," Sir Edgar answered, "see the protector. I owe him some amends, and would fain tell him how highly I esteem the fruits of his good government at home and his wise policy abroad. The soldier here on duty tells me that he is ill at ease, and has denied me entrance. I trust he is not seriously diseased."

The Latin secretary shook his head, and the expression of his countenance, so joyful at the recognition of his friend, altered perceptibly. "He is, indeed, much ailing, we trust not mortally; but his old ague hath returned on him, and what with that, and deep anxiety for Lady Claypole's health, and over-laboring in the service of the state, he is reduced so greatly that his physicians *fear*. Yet is he marvellously held up by faith in the Lord; and all his chaplains have assurance strongly impressed upon their hearts that he shall live, not die. I doubt not he will see you, and forthwith; for often hath he spoken of you recently, and as of one whom he once cherished greatly, and greatly regrets alway."

And, without farther words, he bade the page send some one straightway to lead hence Sir Edgar's horse, and to desire the chamberlain acquaint his highness that John Milton was below, with an old friend and comrade, even Sir Edgar Arden. After a few minutes, which the friends consumed pleasantly in slight though interesting conversation, a private of the guard relieved Sir Edgar of his horse, and shortly afterward an officer of the protector's household made his appearance, and, informing them that his highness was engaged at present in his meditations with worthy Master Peters and others of his chaplains, but that he shortly would find leisure to receive them, ushered them with no little courtesy into an antechamber, as Milton whispered to his friend, of the same suite which Oliver at present occupied. Nearly an hour passed away before they received any farther word; but each of those congenial spirits had so much to hear and narrate to the other, that the moments did not lag,

and it was with a feeling nearly akin to wonder that they heard the clocks striking ten just as the chamberlain announced to them the wish of the protector to see them in his chamber.

They entered; and, propped up by cushions on his feverish bed, care-worn, hollow-cheeked, and heavy-eyed, with a wild expression of anxiety and pain on his thin features, there lay the mighty being from whom Sir Edgar had last parted in the pride of manhood, in the plenitude of power, in the indomitable confidence of his own unresisted faculties. On one side of his pillow sat Hugh Peters, his familiar chaplain, a stern and gloomy-looking fanatic, intently occupied, as it would seem, in studying his pocket bible; and on the other his wife, a lady of majestic bearing, although wanting somewhat in the easy dignity which is acquired only by acquaintance from childhood upward with courtly circles, and two of her daughters, the ladies Falconbridge and Rich, who had been summoned from their sister's deathbed by an express, bearing tidings of their father's dangerous seizure.

An air of deep gloom pervaded the apartment, and melancholy sat like a cloud upon the comely faces of the younger ladies, his wife repressing all outward demonstrations of disquiet in obedience to the wish of Oliver, who pertinaciously maintained that full assurance had been vouchsafed him from on high that he should yet be spared, until his usefulness should be completed to the Lord and to the people whom he had been placed in trust to govern for their good.

Calm as he was, and self-restrained at all times, Arden could not so far command his voice as to prevent it from trembling as he addressed his old commander, and a large tear rolled slowly down his cheek as he beheld the ravages which grief, and time, and terror had wrought on his expressive features and Herculean form. But Cromwell saw not the tear nor noticed the unusual tone of Edgar's salutation. As he perceived his chosen officer, a mighty gleam of exultation flashed over his worn lineaments, and his pale lip was curled with honest triumph. He well remembered, and had often pondered on the last words he had heard from the sincere and conscientious man;

who stood beside him; he knew his former doubts; he had interpreted aright his silence, his protracted absence; and now, that he had sought him out unsummoned, he felt the proud conviction that this man's mind was altered; that this late visit was a confession of his error; a token of his approbation and good-will. All this rushed on the dying sovereign's soul at once; and in the midst of pain, and doubt, and peril, he exulted. Exulted, that the only man in his whole realm whose disapproval he had dreaded, and whose applause he valued, had, by this long-delayed approach to reconciliation, sealed his avowal, that, in ruling England, *he* had ruled, not for his own aggrandizement, but for the people's welfare.

"Ha! Edgar Arden!" he cried, in tones resembling more his ancient voice of power than any which, for many a mournful day, he had sent forth. "Though late, I greet thee, I rejoice to see thee, yea, as a trusty friend, a valued and long-lost companion. Verily hath it relieved me of well-nigh half my ailment to grasp this honest hand of thine, to hear once more the accents of a voice which no man ever heard to utter aught save words of truth and honor. I thank thee, good John Milton, that thou hast brought to me this—I had well-nigh said—this *son*. Surely, though not a prodigal, for him shall there be slain a fatted calf, and that right early."

Again Arden was much affected, *so* much that Oliver perceived it; and pressing Edgar's hand, which he had still retained in his own burning grasp, "Think not," he said, "so gravely of this matter. 'T is but a little sickness, a paltry fever. Surely we two have ridden on such real perils, and ridden, though I say it, with an unblenching heart and a calm brow, that it is not for us to quake and tremble in the soul if that a petty ague shake these our mortal sinews. I tell thee, man, the Lord hath heard our prayer—mine, and these holy men's—He hath yet need of me in mine appointed place on earth; nor will he yet yield up his servant into the jaws of death. I tell thee, *years* are yet before us, years full of usefulness, and happiness, and glory, and we will part no more. Thou wilt not leave me any more, Sir Edgar?"

"Not on this side the grave," Arden replied. "When

last we parted, I was, I own it, blinded. Blinded by wrongful and unmerited suspicion. I thought you selfish and ambitious; I foresaw that you *must* be the ruler of this land, and I fancied that to be so had been the aim and object of your life; that you had wrested circumstance to your advantage, made time and tide your slaves. I own I was in error—and, with me, to own is to repair. The elder Charles was, I confess, unfit to reign, unfit to *live!* for, had he lived, we must have warred with him forever. He dead, there was no choice save between you and a republic. And pardon me that I believed it your intent to seize the reins of government at once on the king's death; and that, believing so, I deemed your agency in that great trial as mere deceit and fraud. Justly, however, honestly, you suffered the experiment to work; and had the people been—as in my poor opinion never people were nor will be while this universe exists—capable of self-government, fit to elect their rulers, or willing to submit to laws of their own making, they had been still self-governed, and, as they term it, free. I thank God that they are so no longer. Better, far better, if it must be so, *one* tyrant than ten thousand. But you, sir, are no tyrant; but the sagest, boldest, and most prosperous monarch that ever yet has governed Britons. Dreaded abroad, honored at home, you have indeed, as you did prophesy to me long years ago, you have indeed caused the mere name of Englishman to be as greatly and as widely honored as ever was the style of antique Roman. You know that I nor flatter nor deceive, but always speak right onward. I owed you reparation for unjust suspicion, and I have made it. So far, then, we are quits! Now, then, as to the man who has made England mightier, freer, happier than ever she has been before, as to the undisputed and only fitting ruler of the soil, I tender you my service and allegiance!"

"True friend! true friend!" cried Cromwell. "You, and you only, have judged of me, and have judged aright. The boldness of your former censure confirms the frankness of your present praise. You, only, dared upbraid me with ambition; you, only, envy not the greatness which has been thrust upon me. Surely, could England

have been free, and tranquil, and at peace, never had I sat on this thorny eminence; but the Lord willed it so; and, as he wills, it must be. I thank you, and most cordially do I accept your service, and frankly do I tell you it will avail me much; for you I *may* trust, and, save only you and excellent John Milton, I know not any other. The heathen have come round about me, and digged pits, and wove snares on every side; traitors are in my guard; false prophets in my chamber; spies and assassins everywhere; daggers around my pillow; and ratsbane in my cup. Yet, by the Lord's help, have I set them all at naught; and confident am I that he will not abandon me. Truly, of all his mercies, none do I esteem more wonderful than this, that he hath given me once more in you a friend after mine own heart and a faithful coadjutor."

The veteran's eye kindled as he spoke, and his cheek wore a healthful color, and his voice sounded with all its wonted firmness; it was, indeed, as he himself had worded it, as if one-half his ailment had been banished by this most opportune and unexpected visit from the man whom, perhaps *alone*, he truly loved and honored.

There is no truth more certain, than that those most practiced in deceit themselves most sensibly perceive and fully honor the absence of deceit in others; and it may be that Cromwell, who was unquestionably, in some sort, though for the most part self-deceived, a deceiver of the world, admired Arden for that very frankness of bold honor which he himself possessed not. It may be, also, that, misguided by his wild fanatical opinions, he at one time, believing himself the object of immediate inspiration, looked on his own worst actions as his brightest deeds; and at another, when the dark fit succeeded to the fancied vision, brooded despairingly over his own misdoings, till he conceived himself entirely reprobate and outcast. Doubtful and wavering, then, in his own sense of right, in his own conscience, how natural that he should draw deep comfort to his unquiet soul from the assurance that a man, whom he knew to have perused his heart more narrowly than any living being, and to have judged of him at one time with such harshness as to abandon him, now looked on his career with an approving eye; now

bade him hail, as the protector of his country's honor; now tendered his allegiance, and professed his willingness to follow wherever he should lead. How natural that he should feel this as a confirmation of that which he would fain believe, as a proof to himself of his own half-suspected honesty.

Such were, it is most probable, the causes of the almost supernatural effect produced on Oliver by the return of Arden; and, truly, it was almost supernatural. Till a late hour of the night he kept him by his side, conversing cheerfully, nay, almost joyously, on his own future prospects, on the advancement of his country's interest abroad, on the diffusion of intelligence and of religion, which is philosophy, at home. And Arden—as he now felt that he had wronged Cromwell in his first suspicion, when he expected him to seize the sceptre immediately upon the death of Charles; as he was convinced that, when he *had* usurped that sceptre, he was entirely justified in wresting it from the vile faction which was plunging England into misery and madness; as he perceived that he had in all things used his acquired power with wisdom, justice, and moderation, for the present welfare and the future glory of his people—rushing, perhaps, too hastily to the conclusion that he had acted in all things, and from the first, on motives purely patriotic—Arden responded to his cheerful mood; and amid pleasant memories of those past evils, which it is often pleasurable to contemplate when we are safe and happy, and high anticipations for the future, the hours wore onward, and midnight was announced from many a steeple, and yet that friendly conclave thought not of a separation.

At that dead hour of the night a guarded step was heard without the door, and an attendant entering, called out the Lady Cromwell; and she, after an absence of some small duration, returned far paler than before, and with the traces of fresh tears upon her cheek, and whispered Lady Falconbridge, who, in turn, left the chamber for a while, and, coming back, again called out her sister. It was strange that this dumb show continued for so long a time, that Arden, and even the blind poet, perceived that something must be seriously amiss, ere Cromwell noticed

it. He was, however, so much reinvigorated, his spirits had so wondrously regained their elasticity, that he talked on, and smiled, and even jested, until so deep a gloom had fallen on his auditors, infected by the evident and hopeless sorrow engraved in legible characters upon the woebegone and pallid face of Lady Cromwell, that he could not continue longer in his happy ignorance.

"Ha! What is this?" he cried, looking around from face to face in blank bewilderment. "What is to do? Speak out, I say," he gasped; his voice, which had but lately been so strong, now scarcely audible—"Arden, speak out—*you* never have deceived me;" and then, before he could receive an answer, had it been possible for Edgar to answer, as his eye met his wife's, "I see," he said, "I see," in tones resigned, but inexpressibly sad and heartbroken. "Elizabeth is dead! my daughter, oh my daughter!"

Gradually he sank down from the pillows, upon which he had been raised in a half-sitting posture, and, though he struggled hard still to maintain his wonted and severe composure, the effort was too great for his enfeebled frame. For a few seconds' space he was successful; then stretching out his wasted arms while his teeth chattered in his head, and all his limbs shook as if palsied, and the large scalding tears poured down his hollow cheeks—"My God," he cried, "my God—why—why hast thou forsaken me!" He pulled the coverlet about his temples, turned his face to the wall, and burst into an agony of sobs, and groans, and fierce convulsions, that haunted Edgar's ears long after he had left the apartment of the bereaved and dying parent.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASSING OF A MIGHTY SPIRIT.

Beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and happier yield his breath.
CHILDE HAROLD.

It was the third day of September, the anniversary of Worcester, of Dunbar, the lucky day of Cromwell; the day marked out as he believed, by planetary influence; the day whereon he never yet had undertaken aught but he therefrom had reaped a golden harvest. And it would have appeared, indeed, to any who beheld the conflict of the elements that day, that something of great import to the nations was portended.

For, at the earliest dawn, the skies were overspread with a deep lurid crimson, and the sun rose, although there was no mist on the horizon, like a huge ball of heated metal, dim, rayless, and discolored; and, as he rose, the unchained winds went forth, raving and howling through the skies with such strange fury, as not the oldest men could liken or compare to aught they had themselves beheld or heard of from their fathers.

The largest trees were uptorn from their earthfast roots, and hurled like straws before the whirlwind; chimneys and turrets toppled and crashed incessantly; cattle were killed in open fields by the mere force of the elements; the seas were strewn with wrecks; the lands were heaped with ruin. Nor did these prodigies occur in one realm only, or in one degree of latitude; from north to south, from east to west, the same strange tempest swept over every shore of Europe, and at the self-same hour, marking its path with desolation. The same blast dashed the vessels of the hardy Norsemen against their sterile rocks, and plunged Italian argosies into the vexed depths of the Adriatic; the same blast shivered the pine-trees on the Dofrafells, and the cypress by the blue waves of the Bosphorus.

Thunder, and rain, and hail, and the contending fury of the winds, shifting and veering momently from point to point round the whole compass, and the incessant streams of "fire from heaven," united to make up a scene of horror such as the Christian world had never perhaps beheld either before or since; and, amid that strange din and warfare, the parting soul of him, who had so swayed the mightier influence of human passions to his will, who had so ridden fearlessly through the more murderous, if less appalling, strife of human warfare, was struggling to take wing, to flee away and be at rest.

On the preceding night all his physicians had pronounced his cure impossible; his dissolution speedy and certain; for since the death of his beloved daughter, he had not closed an eye by night, or enjoyed any intermission from the recurring fits of ague and of fever. Yet still his preachers buoyed him up with their insane and impious blasphemies, asserting that the Lord, even the Lord who cannot lie, had promised them that this his servant should recover; and even when the mortal pains had yielded to the weakness of approaching death, they still forbade him to fear aught or to make any preparation. On the preceding evening, seeing the tribulation and alarm depicted on the anxious features of his wife, he took her kindly by the hand, and said, "Fear not for me, my love, nor think that I shall die; I am sure of the contrary."

"Oh, sir," said Arden in reply, who, since their reconciliation, had scarcely left his pillow for a moment, "oh, sir, believe it not; they are no friends to you who would deceive you any longer. Your trust must be on High, for you have well-nigh done with earth. Not one of your physicians believes you can outlive to-morrow. They that would tell you otherwise have lost their reason."

"Say not," he instantly replied, "that I have lost my reason; I tell you the plain truth. I know it from authority far better than any you can have from Galen or Hippocrates. It is the answer of the Lord himself to our prayers; not to mine only, but to those of others, others who have an interest with HIM more close and intimate than I have. Go on, then, cheerfully, and, banishing all sorrow from your looks, deal with me as with a serving

man. Ye may have skill in the nature of things, yet nature can do more than all physicians put together; and God is far more above nature!"

It was in vain that Edgar, who could not endure that he should go hence in this wild and terrible delusion, argued with him, professing his sincerity with tears, and urging on him the necessity of immediate preparation, unless he would rush headlong into his Maker's presence, unhouselled and unshriven. It was in vain that he remonstrated with the fanatical and blinded monitors, who, to the last, assured their victim of speedy restoration. By Peters, Sterry, and the rest, he was rebuked as an unthinking, carnal-minded person, setting at naught the intimations of the Holy One, a scoffer, and blasphemer; and Cromwell was admonished to put from him one whose presence in his chamber might well draw down upon its inmate some dread manifestation of Divine displeasure; but to this Oliver objected so decidedly that they dared urge it no farther.

"He is sincere," he answered to their exhortations; "sincere, but much in error! The Lord hath not vouchsafed to *him* the light which guides *our* footsteps; yet he is most sincere, and pure according to his lights, and so—although those lights be darkened—more justified, it may well be, than *we*, who have more opportunities of grace and less excuse for sin. He shall not leave me. Tush! Tell me not—I say he *shall* not! Begone, all you—*he* shall alone be near me!"

His will was instantly obeyed, and through the livelong night Sir Edgar watched beside his bed; and on that night, for the first time since Lady Claypole's death, did sleep visit his weary eyes; but sleep how terrible—not the "soft nurse of nature," but its convulsion. As his eyes closed in slumber the delusions which he cherished while awake forsook him, and death, in all its terrors, glared on him face to face. His features, bold still and firm, though pallid and emaciate, were frightfully distorted by the agonies of terror and despair; the sweat stood in dark beaded bubbles on his brow, and his thin hair seemed, to the sight of the excited watcher, to bristle on his head: his hands were cast abroad like those of a man drowning

and the whole bed was shaken by the convulsive shivering of his limbs.

"Keep them away!" he cried, in words painfully clear and thrilling, "keep them away! What would they with me? No! no! I am not ready—I will *not*—do they not hear me say, I will *not* die?" and he ground his teeth violently, and struggled as with persons striving to drag him down. Appalled beyond expression, Sir Edgar touched him gently, and he awoke; but, still unconscious and bewildered, he continued for a moment to resist and utter, "Avaunt! Get thee behind me! for what have I to do with thee, thou Evil One?" Then, recognizing Arden, he forced a feeble smile, and muttering something of a fearful dream, composed himself again to rest, and, after a few moments, was again asleep. But instantly again the vision came upon him; and this time his eyes were opened wide, and stared abroad as if awake.

"Away with it," he gasped; "away with that blood-stained and headless trunk! Why dost thou glare on me, thou discrowned spirit; thou canst not say I judged thee? King! king!—there be *no* kings in England—the *man*, the *man* Charles Stuart! Beseech me not, I say—*I* cannot save thee! It falls! it falls! that deadly-gleaming ax! Ha! ha! said I not so—there be no kings in England?" Again he woke, and once again, after a little time, sunk into a perturbed and restless slumber, which lasted, although fitful and uneasy, until the morning cocks had crown.

Then, with a start that raised him from his pillow, "Devil!" he muttered, through his clinched teeth; "ha, devil, was it thou? thou that didst break my childish sleep, telling me I should be the First in England? thou that didst plunge my stainless soul in blood, oceans of blood, my king's, my people's, my own child's? Blood! blood!" he shrieked aloud, and once more Edgar touched him; but, as he was aroused, unwilling to encounter or abash him, he feigned himself to sleep, and heard him say, "Happy! Oh! how innocent and happy! Lo! how serene he slumbers. But it was a dream—a foul dream only." For a time he kept silence, but once or twice groaned deeply; and, after a little while, Arden beheld

him through his half shut lids, raise himself on his knees, and, with clasped hands, pour forth a prayer befitting rather, as Ludlow afterward observed when it was found transcribed among his papers, "a mediator's than a sinner's deathbed!"

"Lord," he exclaimed, "although I am a wretched and a miserable creature, I am in covenant with thee through grace; and I may, I *will* come unto thee for thy people. Thou hast made me a mean instrument to do *them* some good and *thee* service; and many of them have set too high a value on me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. But, Lord, however thou dost dispose of me, continue to go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious throughout the world. Teach those who look too much upon thy instruments to depend more upon thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are, thy people, too; and pardon the folly of this short prayer, for Jesus Christ his sake, and give us a good night if it be thy pleasure."

Having, to the unspeakable astonishment of Arden, who, when he saw him rise, expected a confession of his crimes and an appeal for pardon, poured forth these strange ejaculations, he laid him down, and slept a calm, and, as it seemed, refreshing sleep, until the first beams of the lurid sun shone into the apartment; then, starting up again, "Hell!" he shrieked out; "hell hath gat hold upon me; the pains of hell have compassed me!" and would have leaped out of bed upon the floor if Edgar had not caught him in his arms.

At the same moment the awful uproar of the tempest burst suddenly and without warning upon the terrified and reeling world. But the storm fell unheeded on the ears of Oliver and of his sole attendant; both were too deeply moved, the one by the remembrance of his tremendous dreams, the other by compassion, pity, and dismay, to think of anything external. In a short time, however, Oliver regained his wonted calmness; and, making no allusion to the occurrences of the past night, Edgar

disturbed him not by speaking of them. As the day now advanced, his wife, his children, some of his officers, and all his chaplains crowded into his chamber; he spoke to all kindly and cheerfully; but Edgar saw that all the overweening confidence of the preceding day had left him; and though the fanatics continued to rave in his ears, promising present health and future glory, he listened with indifference, and his eye no longer flashed at their bold prophecies, nor did he answer anything, nor prophesy at all himself, though called on frequently throughout the day by Peters to say something to the Lord, and to make intercession.

For the most part he lay still upon his back, with his hands folded on his breast, and his face perfectly composed and calm; but twice or thrice a short quick spasm twitched the muscles of his mouth, and once he wrung his hands, perhaps unconsciously. He spoke but seldom, and then only in short sentences, evidently growing weaker every moment. Once he remarked upon the day, *his* anniversary, but, strange to tell, he noticed not at all the furious tempest which shook the very palace-roof above him, and, saving in its lulls, drowned every sound of voice or motion. Toward noon he dozed a little while, and on his waking, called to Peters.

"Tell me," he said, "I pray you—and, on your life here and hereafter, I charge you to tell me truly—for, look you, 'tis a grievous thing to lie unto a man situate like to me. Can one who hath been once in grace fall off by any means, and ever become reprobate thereafter, so as to peril his salvation?"

"Surely he cannot!" answered the fanatic. "He that is *once* in grace can never more backslide, nor fall, nor even falter! All that he doth thereafter is of grace, and, therefore, holy! — his life is precious — his salvation certain!"

"Soh!" answered the dying man; "I then am safe—for sure I am that *once* I was in grace."

Shocked beyond all expression, Edgar would fain have once again renewed his exhortations; but, just as he began, Cromwell asked for his family; embraced them one by one, and almost instantly sank into a state of lethargic

stupor, from which no efforts of his now alarmed attendants could rouse him. At length, just as the clock was striking three, a louder crash of thunder than any of the claps which had rolled almost incessantly throughout the day broke on the melancholy silence. "Cannon!" he muttered, faintly, as he woke, the sound commingling with his recollections of the day. "Lambert, bring up the cannon! Charge there—charge with your pikes, valiant and trusty Goff!"

"His mind is at Dunbar," whispered one of the military men to Arden; "but, lo! wherefore do they torment him?"

The question was produced by a late effort on the part of some about his person to induce the dying ruler to declare who should succeed him. To a direct, straightforward question he gave no answer; then he was asked, should Richard be the next protector, and a faint motion of his head, casual, as it seemed to Arden, and unmeaning, was construed to imply assent. A little longer he gasped feebly, without speaking.

Another crash of thunder appeared to split the very firmament, and the blue flickering lightning fearfully glanced upon the dying soldier's pale, stern features. They kindled in the glare, and the eye flashed, and the hand was waved aloft. "On!" he exclaimed; "on, ironsides! Down with the sons of Zeruiah!" Then, in a feebler tone, "Ha!" he continued, "have at thee! What, again? Dismounted—oh! dismounted! Ho! rescue—help—help! Arden—lost! lost!—Arden!—help!—resc—" The sharp death-rattle cut short the unfinished word—the eyeballs glazed—the lifted hand sank nerveless—the jaw dropped. The strife was over. Ambition, energy, sagacity, and valor, won for the great usurper naught but a broken heart and an untimely grave.

There was a deep hush in the chamber, awfully solemn and impressive. A woman's sob first broke the spell; and then the voice of his first follower—last friend, "There passed the spirit of the greatest man England has ever seen. Peace to his soul. His faults die with him. But never — never, while the round world endures, shall his fame be forgotten, or the good he hath done his coun

try pass away. Weep, England, weep—your benefactor is no more—and I foresee much strife, much anarchy, much blood. But he who hath gone hence hath sown the seed, the seed of thy prosperity, thy freedom, and thy glory; and thou shalt reap the harvest, thou and thy sons, for many a deathless age, when he who now is nothing, and I who mourn above him, shall be dust unto dust, and ashes unto ashes!"

THE END.

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